

are consequently poor. Goats are bred in fairly large numbers, but not by people who make it their only or even their principal means of earning a livelihood, the general practice being for poor labourers or poor old women to keep a few goats to eke out their scanty means of subsistence. Very few sheep are bred in the district, pigs are kept only by the low caste of Kāorās, and horses are still rarer.

There is little real pasturage land in the district, and fodder is consequently scarce. Formerly, it is said, considerable areas were left untilled in every village and reserved for the grazing of the village cattle. Now, the pressure of the population on the soil has resulted in the pasture lands being brought wholly or partly under the plough, so that there in most villages there is not a sufficient area of pasturage provided for the cattle, while there are not a few villages where there is no pasture land at all and the cattle graze in the rice fields after the crop has been out. The following are reported to be the principal grazing lands left. In the large village of Deāra in thāna Kalāroā, which is enclosed on three sides by the Kabadak river and is inhabited by upwards of 300 families of Goālās, there is a tract of land, about 2 square miles in area, which is free from cultivation and is reserved for pasture. There is a similar tract of land of about the same area on the east of the police station of Kalāroā, which is used by herdsmen of the Goālā caste for grazing purposes; and pasturage is also allowed on the open ground in front of the Khulnā Collectorate.

A veterinary hospital with a dispensary was opened at Khulnā in 1905-06. Rinderpest occasionally breaks out in a severe epidemic form, as in 1903-04 and 1906-07, when 2,899 and 2,640 cattle respectively died from this cause alone. Veterinary assistance.

CHAPTER VII.

NATURAL CALAMITIES

FAMINES. KHULNA suffered in common with other parts of Bengal from the famine of 1769-70, traditions of which still linger among the people who refer to it as the *kata mancantar*, i.e., the famine of 10 seers, because paddy sold at the rate of a *kata* (10 seers) per rupee. The famine of 1866 did not affect the district very seriously, but there was distress in the Sātkhīrā subdivision, where rice was selling at 8 seers per rupee in the middle of June. This subdivision was then part of the 24-Parganas, and it is mentioned as one of the two localities in that district in which deaths were directly attributable to starvation. The distress appears to have been most acute in the Kalaroā thāna, where money and rice were distributed to the famishing, an average of 233 people being relieved daily during August at the relief depôts. In the famine of 1874 a portion of the Kālīganj thāna, lying south of the Kāukhālī and east of the dried-up bed of the river Jamunā, was affected. A relief kitchen was opened at Syāmnagar, and the road from Kālīganj to Nakipur was constructed, but the people tided over their difficulties without much outside assistance. The records of these early famines are very meagre, but they are sufficient to show that the greater portion of the district remained practically immune from famine. The only other famine which has visited the district was that of 1897, which was due to an unusual combination of adverse circumstances. The following account of this famine is condensed from the report by Mr W. H. Vincent, i.c.s., then Collector of Khulna.

FAMINE OF 1897. The famine of 1897 affected only a portion of the district, viz. thānas Kālīganj, Asāsuni, Māgurā and Sātkhīrā in the Sātkhīrā subdivision and thāna Paikgāchā in the Khulna subdivision, an area extending over 474 square miles and containing a population of 276,000. With the exception of 25 square miles in thāna Sātkhīrā and 7 square miles in thāna Māgurā, which comprise comparatively high lands, the area which was affected consists of low flat country intersected by numerous tidal *khāl*s and protected from inundation by small embankments called *dhāris*.

The soil is impregnated with salt and grows nothing but *aman* or winter rice, which will not thrive unless there is enough fresh water to wash salt out of the ground. The inhabitants of this tract are mostly illiterate and improvident; the zamindars are absentees and generally indifferent to the welfare of their tenants; while the subordinate tenure-holders are small men and impoverished. Embankments had been permitted to go out of repair, thus allowing salt water to percolate into the fields to the gradual deterioration of the soil, while in 1895 a storm-wave swept over the distressed tract leaving a deposit of saline matter, which the rainfall of 1896 was not sufficient to wash out. The latter was scanty and unseasonable, and the result was a failure of the winter rice crop.

There had been excellent crops in the years 1893-94 and 1894-95, the outturn of winter rice being 14 and 16 annas respectively. The rainfall of 1895-96 was deficient, and consequently all the lands were not cultivated; yet the people would have got a fair crop but for the cyclonic storm which visited the affected tracts on the 1st October 1895, and which by driving salt water into the fields destroyed the young plants. The result was that the outturn of the winter rice crop was only 10 annas, and when the year 1896-97 opened, the people were already in straitened circumstances.

After the 1st October 1895, when 9.92 inches of rain fell, there was scarcely any till April 1896, in which month only 2.26 inches were recorded. This continuous drought, lasting over 6 months, increased the saline matter both in the soil and in the river water. The rainfall in May was only 4.09 inches as against 6.28 inches, the normal rainfall for the month; and though 13.72 inches were received in June, this was not sufficient to undo the effect of the prolonged drought. In July the rainfall was 9.28 inches, but in August again it was scanty, being only 5.95 inches. Transplantation was consequently retarded, and lands recently sown dried up. When good showers fell in the beginning of September, transplantation was pushed on as vigorously as possible, but the season was now far advanced, and in many places no seedlings could be obtained. Lands sown so late required much moisture for the steady growth of the young plants, but during the whole of October and November no rain fell, and in the last week of December the fall was only 0.78 inch.

In ordinary years river water becomes fresh early in July, and remains fresh till the middle of November; but this year it was brackish till the middle of August, and again became brackish in the beginning of October. A plentiful fall of rain was

expected during the Pūjās, but no rain actually fell. The temperature rose higher and higher, and the hot winds during October rapidly dried the surface of the soil, and the moisture necessary for the growth of the young rice was absent.

The figures given above relate to rainfall recorded at Sātkhirā town, but much less rain actually fell in the distressed area. It was, moreover, unevenly distributed; and the result was that only in some low lands not in the immediate vicinity of salt-water *khāls* and rivers was the crop partially saved. In these circumstances, the average outturn of the great rice-producing tract bordering on the Sundarbans hardly came up to 2 annas. The failure of the staple crop, coupled with the fact that in the preceding year also crops had been short, reduced the people to extreme poverty and rendered relief measures urgently necessary in the beginning of January 1897. The portion of thāna Paikgachā lying on the left bank of the Kabadak was affected by the same causes.

The distress was most severe in north Asāsuni, south Asāsuni, and north Kaliganj, where 6 to 8 per cent. of the population had to be relieved, as the lands there are the least protected by *bheris* or embankments. It was less severe in south Kaliganj, Syāmnagar, and Nunnagar, where the lands are better protected, and here the proportion of people relieved varied from 3 to 6 per cent.; while in the Māgurā and Budhhātā circles, where the land is comparatively high, it did not exceed 3 per cent. In the east of thāna Paikgachā there was a fair crop, and there also less than 3 per cent. of the population had to be relieved.

When relief operations commenced in the beginning of January 1897, the area of the affected tract was 442 square miles, with a population of 262,000 souls. As the season advanced, distress deepened, and during the fortnight ending the 26th May 25 square miles in thāna Sātkhirā, with a population of 11,000 souls, and 7 square miles in thāna Māgurā with a population of 3,000 souls were added to the affected area. These latter areas comprise comparatively high lands, on which *rabi* crops are grown to some extent. Molasses (*gur*) are also manufactured from date juice, and the people were, therefore, able to bear the strain for a longer period.

The relief works consisted mainly of the excavation of tanks, the construction of new roads, and the repair of old ones. Some *bāndhs* were also erected, and metal was broken into *kāos* for metalling a portion of an important road, in order to attract, if possible, female labourers to the work, and to provide landless labourers with some kind of work during the rains, when

no other works were possible. But this metal breaking was of little use, for the women would not do the work, and the men got plenty of labour elsewhere in cultivation. When the rainy season commenced, the number of relief workers gradually decreased, owing to the fact that many had to attend cultivation, and partly also to the fact that suitable work could not be provided, as it had become impracticable to go on with earthwork. Many of the works had consequently to be stopped. When agricultural operations were in full swing, almost every one went away except a few who were labourers by profession. The relief works were finally closed during the week ending the 11th September 1897.

The number of relief workers gradually rose as more and more works were opened, and decreased as they had to be closed one after another. The ratio of relief workers to the population was 1 to 151, while the highest number was 5,875 during the week ending the 9th June. Gratuitous relief was commenced in the beginning of January with a daily average of 122 persons, and the numbers increased as the season advanced, reaching the maximum during the week ending 7th July, when 11,013 persons received this form of relief. When the rainy season set in and agricultural operations began, prices became easier and the number gradually decreased.

Relief from public funds was given in three ways, viz, (1) relief given to the people at their houses, (2) relief in poor-houses, and (3) relief to artisans. Able-bodied recipients of the first class had to husk paddy or twist jute in return for weekly doles. No work was exacted from the inmates of the poor-houses. The artisans were all weavers who were supplied with thread, and they returned the cloths woven by them, receiving as their wages the market value of the cloth minus the cost of the thread. Six poor-houses were opened at Kāliganj, Syāmnagar, Asāsuni, Nunnagar, Budhhātā and Pratāpnagar. The ratio to the population of the persons relieved in this way was 1 to 53, and the great majority of those relieved were women and children. It is contrary to custom in Khulnā for women, except Bunā women, to do earthwork or carry earth. In consequence, no women went to the relief works and many were in the greatest poverty and distress, and had either to be relieved in poor-houses or left to starve. The percentage on gratuitous relief was never high, and when the poor-houses opened, the way they flocked in was a test of the severity of the distress.

Altogether, the number receiving relief at any one time never exceeded 16,000, and the people showed more resource and

staying power than was anticipated when relief operations began. It was feared that Government would have to help about 8 per cent. of the population, but the number of the relief workers did not rise above 0·66 per cent., while that of recipients of gratuitous relief was not more than 1·86 per cent. throughout the period taken as a whole. The people suffered much, but did not resort to relief works, if they could possibly avoid it.

FLOODS.

The northern portion of the district is liable to occasional floods, but the severity of such inundations is far less than it used to be about a century ago, when a large portion of the volume of the Ganges water poured down to the sea through the district. The Ganges now discharges its waters further to the east, and floods are consequently less frequent and less severe. Only a portion of the district is now liable to inundation from the overflowing of the rivers, and such inundations are in many ways beneficial owing to the rich deposit of silt that they leave.

In recent years the most serious floods have occurred in 1885, 1890 and 1900. The flood of 1885 was due to the bursting of an embankment along the Bhagirathi river near Berhampore in Murshidabad, and lasted from the 12th to the 18th September. It only affected a portion of the district, viz, the north and north-west of the Sātkhirā subdivision, where the rice in the low lands and swamps was destroyed and some of the cultivators' huts were demolished. The flood of 1890 was higher than that of 1885 and affected no less than 100 square miles in the Sātkhirā subdivision. This flood was caused by the overflow of the Jalangi and other channels connected with the Ganges, and was greatly aggravated by the bursting of the Bhagirathi embankment at the end of August. Owing to the silting up of the river channels, the flood water could not be drained off rapidly and subsided very late in the season. The rice crop consequently suffered severely, and the damage could not be remedied by fresh sowing and transplanting. Much misery was experienced during the inundation, but after the floods had subsided, the labourers got plenty of work, and no relief measures were necessary. The last serious flood occurred in September 1900, owing to the heavy rainfall of the 20th and 21st, when no less than 18·38 inches fell at Sātkhirā. All the low-lying villages in the subdivision were under water and a number of houses collapsed, while the loss of cattle was considerable. Great damage was caused to the winter crops, but fortunately no lives were lost.

Cyclones. The district is exposed to the cyclones which sweep up from the Bay of Bengal, often accompanied by a destructive storm-wave. The colonies of settlers in the Sundarbans are specially

exposed to the fury of such storms. Their houses and their fields are only a foot or two above high water mark ; and when the cyclone wave pours up the great streams of the Passur and Haringhātā, and from them spreads over the country, the inundation works cruel havoc among the low-lying isolated villages. The grain in their fields is spoiled ; their houses are torn away and all their stores are lost ; their cattle are carried away and drowned ; and they themselves are reduced to extreme shifts to save their own lives. As an instance of the damage caused in this way may be mentioned the cyclone of the 16th May 1869, which destroyed 250 lives in Morrellganj alone, and caused an immense loss of property. In recent years the most serious cyclone was that of October 1895, which swept over both the Bāgherhāt and Satkhira subdivisions. In the former tract it did much damage to the betel-nuts, which form an important article of export, while in the latter tract the storm-wave which accompanied it did great injury to the winter rice crop by destroying the young plants and by leaving a sterile deposit of saline matter.

CHAPTER VIII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

RENTS. THE rates of rent paid by cultivators in Khulnā vary according to the position and quality of the land, and also according to the demand for it, e.g., a *pān* or betel-leaf plantation would fetch a high rent in places containing settlements of Bāruis, whose hereditary occupation is the cultivation of this crop, but not elsewhere, while the Bāruis themselves would seldom think of emigrating to take up lands with a smaller rental. Generally speaking, too, in the tracts under reclamation, where the competition for land is not keen, no higher rates are paid for land bearing valuable crops than for land of the same quality under rice; and homestead sites and superior lands, i.e., lands on which sugarcane and other rich crops are grown are assessed at the same rent as good rice lands.

The following are reported to be the average rates of rent for different varieties of land in each of the three subdivisions of the district. In the Khulnā subdivision the rent for *dhāni* land, i.e., land suitable for rice, pulses, etc., averages Re. 1-8 to Rs. 3 per *bighā* (Rs. 4-8 to Rs. 9 per acre), and of *bāgāt* or garden land from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 per *bighā* (Rs. 9 to Rs. 18 per acre), *pān* land being assessed at the same rates. In the Bāgherhāt subdivision *dhāni* land fetches from Re. 1 to Rs. 6 per *bighā* (Rs. 3 to Rs. 18 per acre) and *pān* and garden land from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per *bighā* (Rs. 6 to Rs. 9 per acre). In the Sātkhira subdivision the rents paid for *dhāni* land vary from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-5-4 per *bighā* (Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 per acre), for *bāgāt* or garden land from Rs. 2-10-8 to Rs. 13-5-4 per *bighā* (Rs. 8 to Rs. 40 per acre), and for *pān* land from Rs. 2-5-4 to Rs. 13-5-4 per *bighā* (Rs. 7 to Rs. 40 per acre).

As regards the different classes of ryots, it is reported that the rate of rent paid by ryots and under-ryots varies from 2 annas to Rs. 15 per *bighā*, and that the average rate may be taken at Rs. 4 per *bighā*. In the Sundarbans tract, where there are special rates, the rent rates are reported to be 8 annas, 12 annas, and Re. 1

per *bigha*. Privileged rents are paid by some tenants, such as the original settlers, who cleared away the jungle, and their descendants. Tenants of this class are allowed to hold their land at quit-rents; and similar concessions are allowed to tenure-holders and under-tenure-holders, and to their successors in interest, in consideration of the outlay incurred in clearing jungle, maintaining embankments, etc. Similarly, in the Sundarbans the *abadkatidars*, or original settlers who cleared the jungle, are allowed in some cases to hold their land without assessment or at a reduced rental; and similar concessions are allowed to tenants who build and maintain embankments.

From enquiries made in 1895-96 it appears that the provisions of section 50 of the Tenancy Act, that, unless a landlord can prove that the rate of rent has been altered within the last 20 years, it shall be presumed to be permanently fixed, are constantly tending to convert the holding of an occupancy ryot into a permanent and hereditary tenure and a suitable investment for the moneyed classes. Accordingly, there is a tendency for the non-cultivating classes to buy up the rights of occupancy ryots and sublet the lands to under ryots who actually cultivate them; and the middlemen, who buy up the rights of occupancy ryots, extort exorbitant rents from the actual cultivators. These enquiries also showed that the holder of a permanent holding directly under the proprietor pays rent varying from 10 annas to Rs. 2 per standard *bigha*, according to the class of land, and as the average annual value of the gross produce of a *bigha* of land is about Rs. 9, the rent paid represents about a sixth of the value of the gross produce. Under-ryots, however, pay either half the gross produce, or if they pay rent in cash, about a third of the value of the gross produce.

A small minority of the cultivators in the north of the district still pay rents in kind, but this system is on the decline, the tendency being to commute produce rents to money rents. Rents in kind are, however, commonly paid by petty cultivators called *bargādars* or *bargāits*, who pay half the produce of the land by way of rent. In the Sundarbans the system of produce rents is more common, for here a husbandman who has more land than he can manage himself either imports labour for its cultivation or sublets a portion. In the latter case he either leases it out in a regular way or lets it out on what is called the *bhāg* system because he receives a share (*bhāg*) of the produce as rent. This share is usually one-half, and the sub-tenant provides grain, plough and other necessary agricultural implements while the lessor supplies the oxen for the plough.

Produce
rents.

WAGES. There has been little variation in the wages paid for labour during recent years, though on the whole there has been a steady and gradual rise. A mason earns 5 annas to Re. 1-4 a day, a carpenter 5 annas to Re. 1-2, and a blacksmith from 5 annas to 12 annas the amount of their daily wages varying according to their skill. Skilled labour is scarce in the district; and to supply this want a technical school with carpentry and boat-building classes has recently been opened. Coolies or unskilled labourers receive a daily wage varying in the case of adults from 4 annas to 8 annas, as compared with $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 annas 10 years ago; while women are paid 3 to 6 annas a day and boys 2 to 4 annas a day. The average daily wage of a common adult field labourer may be taken at 4 annas per diem, besides two meals, which would cost an additional 2 annas, but during the cultivating season the wages rise to 8 annas besides the two meals. Agricultural labourers are, however, commonly paid in kind, and it is a general custom for day labourers employed in cutting paddy to be paid by a share in the crop varying according to circumstances from one-third to one-eighth of the amount cut by them.

PRICES. The marginal table shews the average prices (in seers and chittacks per rupee) of the two staple food grains, rice and gram, and of salt during the last three years. The exceptionally high price of rice in the last year mentioned is due to the

Year	Common rice	Gram	Salt
	S ch	S ch	S ch
1904-05	14 8	9 4	12 12
1905-06	11 14	12 9	14 6
1906-07	7 14	8 15	15 12

partial failure of the crop in this and other districts, but for many years past there has been a steady rise in the price.

It is of some interest to compare the prices now prevailing with those which obtained in the affected tracts during the famine of 1897. In October 1896 the price of rice was $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $9\frac{1}{2}$ seers per rupee, and in November it was 8 seers per rupee; but in the second fortnight of December it went down to 10 seers, and this continued till the first fortnight of February 1897, owing to the fact that the paddy harvest had just been reaped. The fair outturn in the eastern part of the district also helped to keep down the price for some time, but it went up again, and rose higher and higher till the second fortnight of June, when rice sold at 6 seers 10 chittacks per rupee. The rainfall duly made the prospects brighter and prices became gradually, until in the first fortnight of September new rice

sold at 10 seers 8 chittacks per rupee. This was also the price of rice on the 30th September, when relief from Government funds was closed. It should be added, however, that Burma rice sold at a cheaper rate than country rice, the price being practically the same as in Calcutta plus a small charge for freight and profit. In June, July and the first part of August the price was 7½ to 8 seers; it then fell to 8½ seers, and came down to 9 seers per rupee towards the close of September.

The people of Khulnā are on the whole fairly prosperous. The great majority are dependent on agriculture, living on the produce of their lands and gardens, and selling the surplus to purchase any small luxuries that they may require. The lands, as a rule, produce excellent harvests, especially of rice, and nearly every family has an orchard of coconut and betel-nut trees attached to the house. The sale of the nuts generally gives a ryot enough to pay his rent so that the rice grown in his fields is clear gain, and if the seasons are favourable, he can afford to save something annually. Many cultivators too have large clearances in the Sunderbans, which steadily yield rich crops and enable them to enjoy two harvests in the year. From March to May these peasants cultivate their home lands and then take their ploughs, cattle and labourers to the Sunderbans, where they spend the next three months in cultivating the land. When this is finished, they return home, to find their paddy ready for cutting; and after reaping it, they return again to the Sunderbans for the harvest there. The multitude of waterways also contribute greatly to their prosperity by rendering carriage easy and cheap, for the agricultural produce—rice, jute, betel-nuts, coconuts, whatever it may be—is put on a boat and conveyed to the market or, if need be, sent direct to Calcutta.

MATERIAL
CONDI-
TION OF
PEOPLE.

A significant indication of the comfortable circumstances enjoyed by the majority of the agricultural population is that, as a rule, they do not plough their lands or cut paddy themselves, but employ labourers imported from other districts. Even the small cultivator is in the habit of doing little or no work himself, but simply supervising his labourers; for he has plenty of rice, can catch fish in the tanks and rivers, and has coconuts, betel-nuts and other fruit in his *bagan*, while there is little that he need buy except salt, clothes and tobacco.

On the other hand, the cultivators are liable to suffer periodical loss from the inclemency of the seasons, especially from an unfavourably distributed rainfall. If the rainfall is deficient, their paddy crops are short from want of moisture; if it is heavy, floods submerge the land and damage the rice plants. This

damage is all the greater because the district is intersected by rivers and *khals*, the water of which is saline, especially in the Sundarbans. In this latter tract those cultivators whose villages are subject to annual inundation, are worse off than in other parts of Khulnâ, for though embankments are erected to keep out flood water, these give way if not properly maintained. According to immemorial custom, the landlords are responsible for their maintenance, but the present generation of landlords in too many cases neglect this duty. Improvident habits also detract from the prosperity of the ryots. After the paddy harvest has been gathered, the prudential maxims of economy are forgotten, and they often launch out extravagantly in the purchase of clothes and luxuries. Many are involved in debt, and the exorbitant rates of interest charged by the money-lenders leave them little chance of escape. It is hoped that a remedy for this state of affairs may be found in the cooperative credit societies now being established in increasing numbers.

The zamindârs are generally absentees and frequently indifferent to the welfare of their tenants, leaving the management of their property largely to local agents, who are often ill-paid and not too scrupulous. On the other hand, the ryots are keen-witted and ready to assert their rights, real or supposed, in the courts of law. The *qanhdârs* are described as being impoverished, the rents collected from the tenants being often their only source of income, so that they are unable to bear the strain in years of bad harvests. Generally speaking, the small cultivators and landholders and the landless middle classes are not in comfortable circumstances, and the *bhadralok* with small fixed salaries, who are obliged by their position to keep up appearances, to dress well, and to give their children a good education, find it difficult to maintain their traditional style of living in years of high prices. Landless labourers fortunately are few, and are on the whole fairly well off, for there is a large demand for labour in the Sundarbans, to which crowds of *dâwals* or reapers go in the harvesting season. There is, however, it is reported, another side to the picture. Although some, who have made their money by labour of this kind, add to it by judicious lending to their neighbours, there are others, and those the majority, who spend it in reckless expenditure on marriages and other social functions, and in litigation.

On the whole, the scale of living has risen in recent years. Visits to Calcutta, not only for business but also for pleasure, have become common since the opening of the railway, and the use of imported articles of food and clothing is reported to be general.

Even the cultivating classes have taken to wearing vests, comforters and woollen wrappers, while in the towns and in advanced villages, like Senhâti and Mulghar, the people indulge in luxuries such as tea and biscuits, which were formerly unknown.

CHAPTER IX.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

OCCUPA-
TIONS.

According to the statistics obtained at the census of 1901 altogether 967,000 persons or 77 per cent. of the population are supported by agriculture, and, of this number, 32 per cent. are actual workers, including 19,000 rent-receivers, 281,000 rent-payers, and 6,000 agricultural labourers. The next most numerous group consists of those supported by various industries, who number 147,000 and represent 11·7 per cent of the population. Of these, 37 per cent. are actual workers and include 14,000 fishermen and fish dealers, 5,000 cotton weavers and 4,000 betel-leaf sellers, while goldsmiths, potters, dealers in timber and bamboos, and hide sellers are also numerous. The professional classes number 22,000, representing 1·8 per cent of the population; and 36 per cent of those classed under this head are actual workers, including 3,000 priests and 1,000 medical men. The number of those supported by commerce is very small, amounting only to 8,552 or 0·7 per cent. of the population, and of these, 33 per cent are actual workers. Among those engaged in other occupations are 6,000 boatmen and 23,000 general labourers.

A noticeable feature of the returns is the comparative paucity of unproductive workers and non-workers. The vast majority of the people earn an honest livelihood by the sweat of their brow, and it is a matter of congratulation that, though the district does not contain many wealthy or advanced classes, it is free from a large number of unproductive workers or beggars. It may be added that, generally speaking, the women of the district are all domestic workers. They boil or dry and husk the paddy which their husbands grow, cook the meals of the family, wash the pots, pans and plates, look after the domestic cattle, and keep the home, steady neat and tidy. Most of the Hindu and some of the Muhammadan women also bring the water required for drinking and culinary purposes from the nearest river, *ghat* or tank. But in the neighbourhood of towns, and among those Muhammadans who have any pretensions to gentle birth, the *zanāna* system is observed, and the women are not allowed to go out to bring

water. It is very rarely, indeed, that women go out to work in the fields or anywhere outside their own houses. In the town of Khulnā and a few other places, Būnā women, who are the descendants of immigrants from Burdwan and Bānkurā, go out to work; but few other women do so. When women are compelled to work for their own livelihood, they generally buy paddy, husk it in their own houses, and sell the rice; sometimes also they keep one or two cows or a few goats. A few women have shops of their own or are employed in shops, some become domestic servants, some are reduced to begging, and some either from want, or owing to vicious inclinations, lead a disreputable life.

In the early days of British administration, the principal industry of the district was the manufacture of salt, which was of sufficient importance to necessitate the employment of a considerable staff, with headquarters at Khulnā, and of a small military force. This industry has long since died out, and at present the industries of Khulnā are of little commercial importance, with the exception of those depending on the natural resources of the district, such as fisheries and forests. Generally speaking, the local artisans supply only the necessaries of life, *e.g.*, food and drink of the commonest description, coarse cloth, huts, boats roughly constructed, silver ornaments, earthen vessels, and badly made shoes and slippers. There are no large organized industries or manufactories except sugar refineries, in which, however, only primitive processes are employed.

In some parts of the Sātkhirā subdivision fine cotton cloth and good pottery used at one time to be manufactured to a certain extent, but these industries are decadent. Weaving is now almost entirely confined to the production of coarse cotton cloths by means of hand looms. These fabrics are said to be preferred by the poorer classes to machine-made goods on account of their durability, but even this handicraft is not flourishing. At present, the chief industry is the manufacture of sugar and molasses, but this again has been seriously affected by the competition of imported sugar. Of recent years an industrial and agricultural exhibition has been held annually at Khulnā, and it is hoped that this institution will help to develop the indigenous industries of the district. The following is a brief account of the most important industries.

* Sugar is made by primitive methods from the juice of the *khejur* or date palm. The first process consists of tapping the tree, which begins when the tree is ripe and continues each year thereafter. When the rainy season is over, and there is no more fear of rain, the cultivator cuts off the leaves

Sugar
manufac-
turers.

growing out of the trunk for one half of its circumference, and thus leaves bare a surface measuring about 10 or 12 inches each way. This surface is at first a brilliant white, but becomes by exposure quite brown, and has the appearance of coarse matting. The leaves are cut off by a man who climbs up the tree supporting himself by a strong rope, which he passes round the tree and his own loins. He slides the rope up and down with his hands, setting his feet firmly against the tree, and throwing the weight of his body on the rope. In this manner, his hands are free, and he cuts the tree with a sharp knife like a billhook.

After the tree has remained exposed a few days, the tapping is performed by making a cut into the exposed surface, in the shape of a broad V, and then cutting down the surface inside the angle thus formed. The sap exudes from this triangular surface, and runs down to the angle, where a thin bamboo is inserted, in order to catch the dropping sap and carry it out as by a spout. Below the end of the bamboo an earthenware pot is hung at sunset, and the juice of the tree runs down into it. In the morning, before sunrise, the pots are taken down, and are generally full. The juice is extracted three days in succession, and then the tree is allowed to rest six days, when the juice is again extracted for three days more.

The next process consists of boiling the juice, and this every ryot does for himself, usually within the limits of the palm grove. Without boiling, the juice speedily ferments and becomes useless; but when once boiled down, it may be kept for long periods. The juice is therefore boiled at once in large pots placed on a perforated dome, beneath which a strong fire is kept burning, the pared leaves of the trees being used with other fuel. The juice, which was at first brilliant and limpid, becomes now a dark brown half-viscid half-solid mass called *gur*, which is easily poured, when it is still warm, from the boiling pan into the *gharās* or earthenware pots in which it is ordinarily kept. It is then sold to refiners, and manufactured into sugar.

Dalua
sugar.

Two kinds of sugar are produced, viz., *dalua* and *paka*. *Dalua* sugar is the soft moist, non-granular, powdery sugar used chiefly for the manufacture of Indian sweetmeats. The process of manufacture is as follows. The pots of *gur* received by the refiner are broken up and the *gur* tumbled out into baskets. The surface is then beaten down so as to make it pretty level, and the baskets are placed over open pans. Left thus for eight days, the molasses passes through the basket, dropping into the open pan beneath, and leaving the more solid part of

the *gur*, viz., the sugar in the basket. *Gur* is, in fact, a mixture of sugar and molasses, and the object of the refining is to drive off the molasses, which gives a dark colour to the *gur*. This eight days' standing allows a great deal of the molasses to drop out, but not nearly enough; and to carry the process further, a river weed, called *seola*, which grows freely in the Kabadak, is placed on the baskets so as to rest on the top of the sugar. The effect of this weed is to keep up a continual moisture; and the moisture, descending through the sugar, carries the molasses with it, leaving the sugar comparatively white and free from molasses. After eight days' exposure with *seola* leaves, about four inches on the surface of the mass will be found purified. They are cut off, and the *seola* is again placed on the newly exposed surface. Thus and one other application will be sufficient to purify the whole mass. The sugar thus collected is moist, and it is therefore put out to dry in the sun, being first chopped up so as to prevent it caking. When dry, it is a fair, lumpy, raw sugar, which weighs about 30 per cent. of the original mass, the rest of the *gur* having passed off in molasses.

The sugar produced by the method just described is called *dilua*—a soft yellowish sugar. It can never be clean, because it is clear, from the process used that whatever impurity there may originally be in the *gur*, or whatever impurity may creep into the sugar during its somewhat rough process of manufacture, must always appear in the finished article. Another objection to it is that it tends slightly to liquefaction, and cannot therefore be kept for any considerable time.

Paka sugar is a much cleaner and more lasting article. To produce it, the *gur* is first cast upon flat platforms, and as much of the molasses as then flows off is collected as first droppings. The rest is collected, put into sacks and squeezed, and a great deal of the molasses is thus separated out. The sugar which remains behind is then boiled with water in large open pans, and as it boils, all scum is taken off. It is then strained and boiled a second time, and left to cool in flat basins. When cooled, it is already sugar of a rough sort, and now *seola* leaves are put over it, and it is left to drop. The result is a good white sugar, and should any remain at the bottom of the vessels still unrefined, it is again treated with *seola*. The first droppings, and the droppings under the *seola* leaves, are collected, squeezed again in the sacks, and, from the sugar left behind, a second small quantity of refined sugar is prepared in exactly the same way by boiling. The droppings from the sacks are *chila gur*, and are not used for

further sugar manufacture. About 30 per cent. of the original weight of the *gur* is turned out in the form of pure *paka* sugar.

The primitive nature of the methods pursued will be readily understood by an inspection of a refinery. It generally consists of a large open square, shut in with a fence and having sheds on one or two sides of it, where part of the work, and specially the storing, is done. If it is a refinery for the manufacture of *paka* sugar, we will find several furnaces within the yard, with men busy at each, keeping up the fire, or skimming the pots, or preparing them. If *dalua* sugar is being made, we will see many rows of baskets with the sugar, covered with *sola* leaves, standing to drop. Rows of earthen pots with *gur* or sugar or molasses, according to the stage of manufacture, are seen on all sides; and in the same open yard all the different processes are at the same time going on.

Fisheries.

The fisheries of Khulna are of considerable importance, affording a large number of persons a means of livelihood, even though they have not yet been properly developed. The following account of the industry is extracted mainly from the Report on the Enquiry into the Fisheries of Bengal, by Mr. K. G. Gupta, &c., published in 1907.

Fishing takes place in the estuaries and larger channels only during the autumn and cold weather, i.e., from October to March, until the commencement of the strong south-west wind; but the busiest season is from November to February, when parties of fishermen venture out to the sea-face. During this period the fish keep fresh longer and can be sent to a fair distance; and most of the fish caught, especially the larger varieties, such as *bhiki*, are sent to Calcutta. In the smaller channels within easy reach of Calcutta fishing takes place throughout the year, and fish are often sent alive to Calcutta in bamboo crates. Generally speaking, the greater portion of the Sunderbans tract is neglected from the middle of March to the end of September, but further inland large quantities of prawns are caught, boiled and dried for the Burma market during these months.

The numerous waterways comprised in the Sunderbans constitute one of the most valuable estuarine fisheries in Bengal; but this immense source of fish supply has as yet barely been tapped. The number of fishermen employed is small, the boats are unseaworthy, and there is no arrangement for the quick despatch of their hauls from the fishing grounds. Much food or drinking water cannot be carried in the miserable boats now employed, and it is consequently impossible for the fishermen to proceed beyond a short distance from their homes and the clearings.

made for cultivation. The result is that this great fishery is very imperfectly worked, whereas under more favourable conditions it could be made to supply not only Calcutta but other important markets with abundant fish in fresh condition, and also support a considerable business in preserved fish. As regards the inland fisheries, the silting up of the rivers at their heads and the reclamation of numerous *bils* have greatly affected the supply of fish for which the district was formerly famous.

The methods employed for catching fish are both numerous and ingenious. One favourite engine consists of a large bag net suspended on two long bamboos stuck out at one side of the boat. Sometimes the boat, with the net thus expanded under water, is driven slowly against the current. Sometimes others are tied by a rope to the boat, and trained to plunge about on the sides of the net, so as to frighten fish into it. The fisherman then raises the net quickly by standing on the inside ends of the bamboos, and thus gets all the fish that may be in it. Another common method (rather applicable to marshes than to rivers) is as follows. On the surface of the swamps, large patches of weed called *dháp* are formed, which, on the subsidence of the water, sometimes float out of the marshes, and so down stream. These patches the fishermen fix by placing stakes round their circumference, and then leave them for a day or two. The fish congregate beneath them, and the fishermen by drawing a net round the place and removing the weeds, catch them in large quantities. On the borders of shallow rivers, branches of trees are also placed in the water for the same purpose, viz., to attract fish to one place. On the muddy banks of tidal rivers, little branching twigs are placed to attract prawns, which cluster about the twigs in great numbers and are easily caught. Methods of capture.

The fishermen in the marshes often carry in their boats an instrument like a long broom, with spear-heads in place of bristles. When they pass a big fish, they dart this collection of prongs at it, and usually succeed in bringing it up impaled on one of its points. This, however, is not a regular, but only a supplemental, mode of fishing, for men do not go out to fish armed solely with this weapon. On narrow shelving banks a round net is sometimes used. The fisherman goes along the bank, watching till he sees a place where some fish are lying. He then throws his net in such a manner, that before touching the water it has spread out into a large circle. The edges of the net are heavily weighted with lead, and falling on all sides of the fish imprison them. Cage-fishing, by means of fixed cages of wicker-work, is also common. Every little

streamlet, and even the surface drainage of the fields and ditches, show arrays of these traps placed so as to capture fish. The same method is used, but on a larger scale, in shallow and sluggish rivers, where, in many cases, lines of wicker traps may be seen stretched across the river from bank to bank. Another plan for capturing fish is by attracting them at night by a bright light and trapping them.

The methods above described are used by single fishermen, or by a few men together. The fish, however, have sometimes to stand more formidable battues, when a party go out with nets or cages, and laying a large trap, drive into it many hundred fish at a time.

Fish preserving.

The most usual modes of preserving fish are drying in the sun, artificial heating, and wet salting. Drying in the sun is the process most largely resorted to, especially with the smaller kinds. They are put out in the sun as caught, without any cleaning or mato on the sand, and after three or four days are gathered up and placed in bags or open baskets for transport. The larger kinds are cut open and their entrails removed before drying. There is always a foul smell involved in this process, and the dried stuff does not keep for very long, especially in wet weather. In some cases the fish is not dried until all efforts to sell it fresh have failed, and putrefaction has set in.

Boiling and drying in the sun are methods employed only in the case of prawns intended for the Burma market, for which there are several depôts in Khulna. The business was introduced some 25 years ago by a Muhammadan from Surât, whose example was followed by others, and whose firm still heads the list. From March to September prawns are caught by fishermen in the numerous creeks and channels of the district, and by them sold fresh to the dealers, who have factories for boiling and drying them. The principal firm uses trolleys and heated chambers for the purpose, in which the drying is completed in two or three hours. The shells are separated by beating, and the inner stuff, which gets broken up into the shape of large peas, is packed in bags, in which it keeps for some time. In other cases the fishermen themselves do the boiling and drying and sell the prepared stuff to the dealers. This business brings a large amount of money into the district for distribution to the fishing population at a time when work is otherwise slack.

Wet salting is a method only employed for preserving *hilsa*. The fish are cut up into transverse slices and kept in earthen pots in brine, tamarind being sometimes used. The fish emits a nasty smell, and it takes an acquired taste to relish it.

Boats are largely used in the conveyance of fish, both fresh and dried, as well as alive, and a large part of the supply of Calcutta market is sent in this way from Khulnā and the adjacent districts. Live *bhekti* are put in crates, which are towed by boats and brought all the way from the furthest corners of Khulnā to Dhāpā on the Salt Lake, the journey occupying 3 to 7 days, but a portion of the cargo is always lost. This mode is resorted to more in the rains and hot weather, when dead fish cannot be sent fresh by rail. In the cold weather special fast carrier boats are employed by parties of Sundarbans fishermen to convey the catches to the nearest railway station. At other seasons, slow country boats are in use, but they are so slow as to be almost useless for conveying dead fish over any long distance. The absence of rapid means of conveyance is one of the reasons why the Sundarbans fisheries are not worked more than they are; and so long as this want is not supplied by the establishment of a service of suitable launches, provided with cold storage, no great improvement in the supply can be looked for.

Another important industry consists of wood-cutting, for which there is ample scope in the Sundarbans. The regular wood-cutters live for the most part just north of the Sundarbans; and when the rains have ceased, their season begins. A body of them start in a country boat for the Sundarbans—far south and near the sea. Their craft is provisioned for four months or so, and during that time it remains anchored at the place which they choose as their headquarters. They themselves leave the boat every morning to go to their work, and return to it at night in the same manner as they would come back to their homes. A party usually consists of ten or fifteen men, some of whom are always Bhāwālīs or regular wood-cutters. During the four months they are absent, they cut the wood, rough-hew it, and bind it into rafts or load it on boats. Although generally four or five days' voyage from their villages, some of them from time to time go home to bring news of the party, or to report that one of them has been caught by a tiger or alligator.

These regular expeditions are undertaken chiefly for the purpose of procuring the larger kinds of wood, suitable for posts, boat-building, etc., but they, as well as the occasional wood-cutters, also fell quantities of smaller timber to be used as firewood. The occasional wood-cutters include a number of the cultivators living within the Sundarbans limits or just beyond them. If they have any spare time, as often happens,—for their fields do not employ them all the year round,—they take a

boat, go down to the Sundarbans forests, and there cut a cargo of wood, and bring it up. The demand for wood, and especially for firewood, is so great, that it offers ample inducement to cultivators, even when comparatively well off, to engage in the trade.

A great part of the wood thus brought up from the Sundarbans is *sundri*, which will not float in its green state. It comes up either as beams, or in short pieces of four or five feet long, intended for firewood. The former are transported by being tied outside the boats, or are made up into rafts and floated up along with a mass of lighter wood. The smaller pieces are laden in boats.

Boat-
building.

Boats being the chief means of locomotion all over the district, boat-building is an industry of some local importance. It is carried on at Khanji, Khulnā, Nawāpūrā, Daulatpur, Deārā, Nunnagar, Gobindakathi, Basantpur, Delhātā, Sripur, Srirāmpur and Jhāndāngā. Of these centres of the industry Khanji is the most important, large cargo boats being built and repaired there. The principal classes of boats are (1) cargo boats, (2) *pānshis* or passenger boats, (3) ordinary *dingis* of various size and shapes, and (4) *ghat gis* or fishing boats, which are generally light, long boats made for speed. Formerly *sundri* wood was largely used, as it could be had at a low price; but as that wood is now bought up by large dealers, teak, *sāl*, *junl*, and non-wood planks are imported from Calcutta. Iron-wood, being comparatively cheap and durable in salt water, is used for the bottom, teak for the sides, and *sāl* for the upper part and the cross beams. The timber is generally supplied by a *mahajan* or by the owner of the boat. The carpenters are paid according to the size of the boat, the usual rate being about Rs 4 to Rs 7 per square foot. Their daily wages vary from 8 to 12 annas per day.

Very simple accessories and implements are used, and some shady place beneath a tree is usually selected for the carpenter's work. A fair-sized cargo boat, i.e., one of 600 to 1,000 maunds burden, is built in 4 to 6 months. The cost of such a boat is about Rs 700, and its market value is about Rs. 800. Generally, the boats are let out on hire, except *dingis*, which are offered for sale for Rs 50 to Rs. 200; the *pānshis* or green boats are often sold for Rs. 200 to Rs 400; while the large cargo boats sometimes fetch Rs 1,500. The carpenters are generally Muhammadans or Namasūdras, but sometimes the cultivators build small *dingis* themselves for their own use.

Other
industries.

The manufacture of pottery, cutlery and articles of horn is a fairly important industry at Kāliganj and other places in the Sātkhīrā subdivision, but the other industries of the district

are of little importance. Jewellery is made to a small extent, the characteristic jewellery of the district being the *māduli*, a gold ornament having the shape of two cones joined together at their bases and sometimes flattened at the two ends. Reeds are extensively used both for mat and basket weaving. They are gathered by the mat-makers, Naluās by caste, who make trips to the Sundarbans in the cold weather, returning with a large quantity of reeds, which they work up into mats at their own homes. These mats are sometimes woven of a very large size, and used in place of carpets; they are much better woven than the ordinary native-made article. Baskets are also largely manufactured of reeds; and little colonies of basket-weavers, as well as of mat-weavers, dwell just beyond the Sundarbans. During the cold weather they migrate to some place in the Sundarbans, and remain there weaving baskets, which meet with a ready sale, as they are required for the rice harvest. When the cold weather is over, they return to their villages with a large stock of reeds, and go on with the manufacture in their own houses.

The long leaf of the *Nipa fruticans*, locally called *golpātā*, which grows extensively in the Sundarbans, makes a useful thatching material for native huts, almost every one of which is roofed with this leaf. Honey and bees' wax are collected in the forest. Shells, gathered both on the banks of rivers and marshes, and on the sea-shore, are burnt down into lime. Khulnā is the principal place where lime-burning goes on. Lime made in this way is chiefly useful for plaster and was used in many old buildings. At the end of the 18th century large quantities of it were sent to Calcutta, to be employed in building or repairing Government House. The shells from which it is made are of two kinds—a long sort called *jomrā*, and a round sort called *ghunuk*. The ashes of the shell-lime, mixed with water, form the lime ash, or *chun*, which natives chew with *pān* leaf.

The exports of Khulnā consist mainly of its surplus crops **TRADE.** and the natural products of its forests and rivers. The export of fish is considerable, and Calcutta is dependent for a large part of its supply on this and the adjacent districts. Quantities of timber and firewood are exported from the Sundarbans, besides other jungle products, such as shells, honey, bees' wax, the thatching leaves called *golpātā*, canes and reeds. The agricultural exports consist mostly of rice, paddy and jute, besides a certain amount of gram and oil-seeds. The exports of rice bulk most largely, as the outturn is more than sufficient for local consumption. Betel-nuts and coconuts are also an important export. The

exports of manufactured articles are of little value, consisting almost entirely of molasses or sugar made from date juice and of coarse matting manufactured from the reeds found in the numerous *bils* and marshes.

A rural population such as that of Khulnā has but few wants, and the chief imports consist of articles of necessity, which either cannot be produced at all or cannot be produced cheaply in the district, such as raw cotton, cotton twist, cotton piece-goods, hardware, glassware, sugar (refined), shoes, kerosene oil, coal and coke, lime and tobacco.

Trading
classes.

The principal castes engaged in commerce are Kayasths, Telis, Baruas, Sāhās, Mālos, Baniks, Namasūdras and Muhammadans. Besides the regular merchants and shop-keepers of the towns and villages, there are a number of traders carrying on business in the Sundarbans. Some of them have large boats, with which they visit the clearings, and load up cargoes close to where the grain grows. Others, stationed at some village, buy up grain when they can get it, and ship it themselves or sell it to larger traders. And everywhere there will be found a class of traders called *farās*, who insert themselves between the more petty sellers and the regular trader or *bepāri*, buying up in very small quantities, and when a certain bulk has been accumulated, waiting for the *bepāri* to come to buy, or taking the grain to him to sell it. In these ways the rice passes from the hand of the cultivator into that of the trader (*bepāri*) or merchant (*mahājān*). The trader is a man who has a capital, perhaps of Rs. 300 or Rs. 400. He sometimes exports his purchased rice himself, taking it to a merchant in Calcutta or elsewhere, who will buy it, and so give him money to use for a second similar transaction; or he will sell it on the spot to the larger exporting merchants, men who have large firms in Calcutta and agencies in the producing districts.

Loan
com-
panies.

At Khulnā there is a loan company known as the Khulnā Loan Company. The rate of interest charged by it varies from Rs. 9 to Rs. 18-12 per cent., in proportion to the amount and according to the value of the security offered in ornaments or landed property. It is reported that the rate of interest being high, only the zamindārs and middle classes derive any advantage from the Company, and that while it is a great help to them, cultivators are unable to secure loans. Attempts are being made to establish Cooperative Credit Societies in as many villages as possible, to enable the latter to borrow money when required at reasonable rates. In 1905-06 only one such society had been started, but in 1907-08 altogether twenty-five were established, and the people are beginning to take a more active interest in them.

The chief trade centres are:—in the Khulnā subdivision, ^{Trade centres.} Khulnā, Daulatpur, Phultalā, Alāipur, Kapilmuni, Chuksagar, Chalnā, Jalmā, Dumriā and Kutirhāt; in the Bāgherhāt subdivision, Bāgherhāt, Fakirhāt, Mansā, Jātrāpur, Kachua, Chitalmāri, Gaurambha and Morrellganj; and in the Sātkhirā subdivision, Bardal, Pātkelghātā, Kāliganj, Kālāroā, Debhātā, Chānduriā, Basantpur, Asāsuni, Tālā and Nawābānki. The trade of Khulnā is carried on generally at permanent markets and *hats*, i.e., periodical markets held at different villages, to which the cultivators bring their rice for sale, and where they purchase in return their little home stores and necessaries.

A description of one of these market villages will apply *Hats.* to all, and the following account of one of them is extracted, with a few necessary modifications, from Sir James Westland's Report. If one were to see such a village on an ordinary day, one would see a few sleepy huts on the river bank, and pass it by as some insignificant village. The huts are many of them shops, and they are situated round a square; but there are no purchasers to be seen, and the square is deserted. The day before the *hat* is held, however, large native craft come up from all directions, and anchor along the banks of the river and *khāl*, waiting for the market. Next day boats pour in from all directions laden with grain or conveying purchasers. People who trade in eatables bring their tobacco and turmeric to meet the demand of the thousand cultivators who have brought their rice to market, and who will take away with them a week's stores. The river and *khāl* become alive with native craft and boats, pushing in among each other, and literally covering the face of the water. Sales are going on rapidly amid all the hubbub, and the traders and merchants are filling their ships with the grain which the husbandmen have brought alongside and sold to them. The greater part of the traffic takes place on the water; but on land too it is a busy sight. On water or on land, there is probably a representative from nearly every house for miles round. They have come to sell their grain and to buy their stores; numberless hawkers have come to offer their stores for sale,—oil, turmeric, tobacco, vegetables, and all the other luxuries of a peasant's life. By the evening the business is done; the husbandmen turn their boats homewards; the hawkers go off to the next market village, or go to procure fresh supplies; and with the first favourable tide the boats weigh anchor, and take their cargoes away. Next morning the place is deserted for another week.

The external trade of the district is carried on chiefly by means ^{Trades} of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, steamers and ordinary ^{routes.}

cargo boats. The internal trade is carried on chiefly by country boats plying along the Bhairab, Jamunā, Kāṅksīālī, Kālindī, Kabadak, Madhumatī, Athārābāṅkā, Rūpsā, Bhadrā, and Passur, and along the numerous rivers and creeks intersecting the district, most of which are navigable all the year round. There are two principal trade routes in this district. The first enters the district at Sachinādaha Hāt and proceeds *via* Alāipur to Khulnā, and thence to Bantaghātā. Here it divides into two channels, which meet at Bardal. The upper channel, which can be used by small country boats and launches but is often not navigable by steamers and large boats, proceeds *via* Surkhālī Hāt. The lower channel, which is used by small steamers and large country boats and is always open, proceeds *via* Chalnā Hāt. The former is part of the Inner Boat Route, and the latter of the Outer Boat Route. From Pardal the route goes on to Kāliganj, and leaves the district at Basantpur, from which it proceeds through the 24-Parpanas to Calcutta. The trade of the Ganges, as well as that from Sirājganj, portions of Mymensingh, Dacca, Itanagar, and beyond, comes by this route. The second great route, known as the Steamer Route, comes from Barisal, enters this district at Morichganj, and passing through the uninhabited forests of the Sundarbans leads to Calcutta. This is used by large steamers, flats and timber boats, and is the great channel of trade from the Meghna side of Dacca, Mymensingh and Tippera, Sylhet and Noakhālī.

CHAPTER X.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

THE north of the district is tapped by the Eastern Bengal State GENERAL Railway, which has a line running as far as Khulna. The CONDI-
 remainder of the district is almost entirely dependent on water TIONS.
 communications, for the whole country is intersected by estuaries
 and water channels. The regular route of the river-borne trade
 from Calcutta to Eastern Bengal lies through the district, and
 it is well served by steamers. For internal communication
 country boats provide the principal means of transport, owing to
 the ramification of water channels, which enable boats to find their
 way to every village and almost to the door of every cottage.
 For the same reason roads are necessarily few in number and
 short in length, and being unmetalled—for in this fen country
 stone quarries and *kankar* beds are unknown—they are of little
 use during the rainy season.

Regarding the question of extending the means of communication, the following remarks, recorded by the District Magistrate in 1905, may be quoted:—"It has been a wonder to me at times that in places where cart traffic is limited, and boat journeys are generally resorted to for locomotion, there should be any road at all; but going to the interior I notice the great want of communication between villages situated at some distance from the river banks. I have also seen tow-paths made by Public Works funds and by some of the zamindars not sufficiently broad to permit of two persons walking abreast; and this has led me to think that in our future famine scheme we should convert these tow paths into river embankments sufficiently large to allow a cart to be driven, if not two. These will efficiently prevent the salt water from getting into the fields and villages, and also be a safer means of communication than boats when rivers are boisterous and small dingies cannot ply. I am not in favour of metalling any more roads in this district. Those that we possess are sufficient, but in places where the soil becomes impassable in the rains, some parts may be metalled. If the railway line is extended to Sātkhirā, and then on to Khulnā or

Daulatpur *via* Chuknagar, it will open out a part of the country which is liable to famine. I also hope that the railway may in time be extended to Bāgherhāt and then on to Morrellganj, when it will tap all the grain and jute traffic from Backergunge and bring them within easy reach of Calcutta."

WATER
COMMUNI-
CATIONS.

In any account of the waterways of Khulnā first place must be given to the system of navigable channels, known as the Calcutta and Eastern Canals, or sometimes as the Circular and Eastern Canals, which carry the produce of Eastern Bengal and the Brahmaputra Valley to Calcutta.

Calcutta
and East-
ern Canals.

The Calcutta and Eastern Canals run through this district and the 24-Parganas in Bengal, and through the districts of Faridpur and Backergunge in Eastern Bengal. They have a total length of 1,127 miles, of which 47 miles are artificial canals or cuts connecting the tidal channels. The remainder are natural channels, mainly the tidal creeks and rivers of the Sundarbans, which stretch eastwards from the Hooghly across the Ganges delta. The channels are under the supervision and control of Government, and tolls are charged on vessels when they enter the Circular Canal at Dhāpa lock 5 miles east of the Hooghly.

This is one of the most important systems of inland navigation in the world, judging by the volume of the traffic, which averages a million tons per annum, valued at nearly four million sterling. The situation of Calcutta makes it the natural outlet for the Ganges valley, and this position has been enormously strengthened by the construction of railways; but other measures were necessary to enable it to tap the trade of the Brahmaputra valley and to focus the rich traffic of the eastern districts. The intermediate country is a maze of tidal creeks, for the most part running north and south, but connected here and there by cross-channels, wide near the sea-face but narrow and tortuous further inland. These inland channels are constantly shifting as the deposit of silt raises their beds, while on the other hand the great estuaries near the sea-face are not navigable by country boats from June to October, owing to the strong sea-breezes which prevail during the south-west monsoon.

This system of channels was devised, therefore, in order to allow country boats to pass from the eastern districts to Calcutta by a direct inland route, and the problem has been to keep the natural cross-channels clear of silt, and to connect them with each other and with Calcutta by a system of artificial canals. The channels have been in use for many years, and it is along them that the rice, jute and oil-seeds of Eastern Bengal, the tea of Assam and Cāchār, and the jungle produce of the

Sundarbans pour into Calcutta, while they also carry the exports of salt, piece-goods and kerosene oil from Calcutta to these districts.

To the east the objective of the system is Barisal, the headquarters of the great rice-growing district of Backergunge, situated 187 miles east of Calcutta. There are three alternative routes to Barisal known as the Inner Boat Route, the Outer Boat Route, and the Steamer Route. The Inner Boat Route, which is used by small country boats and launches, passes along the Bhāngar canal and Sibsā river to Khulnā, and thence by the Bhairab river to Pirojpur and Barisal. The Outer Boat Route, which is used by small steamers and large country boats, follows Tolly's Nullah and the Bidyadhari river to Canning, and then strikes to the north-east. The channels it follows in this district will be seen in the map. The Steamer Route, which is used by large steamers and flats, follows the Hooghly river as far as the Bārātālā creek between Sagar island and the mainland, and then turns east and north-east, working its way through various creeks and channels in the Sundarbans till it meets the two routes previously described at Pirojpur.

Included in this system is an important channel, known as the Mādāripur *Bil* route, which in the rains forms a direct means of communication between the railway terminus at Khulna and Mādāripur and other jute centres. The Mādāripur *Bil*, it may be explained, is a large inland depression, in the Faridpur district, between the Kumār and Madhumati rivers, and the channel through it shortens the journey between Khulna and Mādāripur by 89 miles. The improvement of this route, so as to make it navigable for jute-laden steamers and flats during the rains, was commenced in 1900, and has since been completed. The channel is now to be further deepened and widened, so as to make it navigable throughout the year.

The following is a description of the principal routes proceeding from east to west. Principal routes.

Proceeding from Barisal, the Inner Boat Route follows the Madhumati and then goes along the Bhairab, passing by Kachua and Bāgherhāt, as far as Khulnā. From Khulnā the route follows the Rūpsā river to Baitāghātā, whence it passes by Surkhālī to Deluti, and thence by the Sibsā river *via* Paikgachā to the Kabadak. It then goes on past Asāsuni to Kāliganj and thence to Basaptpur, after which it follows the Jamunā as far as Hussainābād, and eventually leads to Calcutta.

The Outer Boat Route branches off from the former at Baitāghātā, and striking southward by the Kāzibachā follows a semi-circular course along the Dhāki and Manās, till it rejoins

the Inner Boat Route near Chāndkhāli. It then leaves it again near Asāsuni, and follows the Kholpetuā, Galghasiā and Bānstalā but rejoins at the junction of the Bānstalā with the Kānksiali *Khal*. An alternative route strikes northwards from Asāsuni to Satkhira; and from Husainābād it pursues a northerly course along the Kālinḍi.

The Steamer Route enters this district at Morrellganj and then follows the Baruikhal as far as Juudhāra. It passes Chandpai a little further on, and then pursues a circuitous south-westerly course through the Sundarbans, leaving this district at its south-western corner.

Boat
Routes.

To the north-west the chief boat route enters the district from Jessore, and after reaching the junction of the Kabadak with the Murichhāp river, proceeds by the latter as far as its junction with the Betnā and the Kholpetuā, where it divides into two channels. Large boats pass along the Kholpetuā, Galghasiā, Bānstalā and Kānksiali channels to Kāliganj, while smaller boats enter the Sobuāh at its junction with the Kholpetuā and proceed to Kāliganj by the Guntākhāli, Hābrā Gāng, Sitākhāli, Jhapjhapiā and Kānksali. The route through the Sitākhāli has been shortened since the opening of the Gobinda Katā *Khal*, and boats of all sizes now pass through it. From Kāliganj the route proceeds through the Jamunā as far as Basantpur, where it again divides forming an inner and an outer passage. The outer passage enters the 24-Parganas through the Kālinḍi river and the Sahebkhāli and Barakuliā *Khals*, while the inner passage proceeds by the Jamunā from Basantpur to Husainābād, where it enters a channel called the Husainābād *Khal*.

Other routes branch off north, east and south from Khulnā. The chief northern route proceeds up the Athārabānkā, the Madhumatī and the Garāi into the Padmā or main channel of the Ganges, and carries the river trade of Northern Bengal during the season when the Nadī rivers are closed. In recent years, the silting up of this route has led to its abandonment by steamers. The eastern route from Khulnā passes down the Bhairab and then by Barisāl through the Backergunge district to Dacca. The main southern route connects Khulnā with Morrellganj.

Besides the rivers, there are several improved natural channels, of which a list is given below:—(1) A small artificial creek, 3 miles long, leads from the Kabadak at a point 4 miles north of Chāndkhāli, to the Sibā river, which comes up from Paikgachā. This channel, which is navigable all the year round, is about 3 miles long and was constructed some years ago to save the boat traffic of the eastern districts from having to make a long detour

northwards. It perpetuates the name of the Assistant Engineer who excavated it, for the village which sprung up at its western end is called Millettganj and the creek itself Millettganj *Khal*. (2) The Kabadak is also connected with the Bānskhāli *Khal* (one of the inner Sundarbans *khal*s) by the Kātā *Khal*, by which a great bend of the river is avoided. This *khal* was excavated by Bābu Prān Nāth Chaudhri, and is used by the sugar boats from Kotchāndpur, Jhingergāchā and Trimohini on the Kabadak in Jessore. But the rush of water at ebb tide is very great, and its navigation consequently requires care. (3) The Najā Kātā *Khal* leads from the Kumrakhāli to the Bairā *Bil*. It is 2 miles long and is navigable all the year round. (4) The Sātkhirā Kātā *Khal* (6 miles long) connects the Bairā *Bil Khal* and the Betnā river. Small boats passing up the Betnā Gāng to Calcutta and back use this *khal* as a short cut; but it is silting up, and has become a receptacle for the filth and drainage of the villages along its banks. Its excavation would involve a large expenditure of money, and is said to be inadvisable, as it would soon silt up again, unless provided with locks at both ends. (5) The Dandia Kātā *Khal*, (6 mile long), connects the Kabadak and the Betnā river. It is navigable for its whole length only during the rains, and as far as Senergānti, a distance of 3 miles, for the rest of the year. (6) The Jogikhāli *Khal* connects the Passur with Nawapārā. (7) The Gobinda Kātā *Khal* or Wazirpur Kātā *Khal* (3 miles long) joins the Kāksiali with the Guntiakhāli; both these are navigable all the year round. Besides these *khal*s, two other *khal*s may be mentioned, viz., the Alāipur *Khal*, which was re-excavated some years ago so as to open out communication with the eastern districts, and the Asāsuni *Khal* in the Sātkhirā subdivision, three miles of which have been deepened recently so as to reopen the short route to Calcutta. All these *khal*s have to be cleared of silt periodically.

The district is served by several steamer services. The *Steamer* Khulnā-Nārāyanganj Daily Mail Service connects Khulnā with the districts of Backergunge, Faridpur, Tippera and Dacca, while the Cāchār-Sundarbans Daily Despatch Service calling at Morrellganj plies through the Sundarbans to Barisal, Chāndpur, Nārāyanganj and Assam. There used to be a daily feeder service between Khulnā, Bāgherhāt and Morrellganj, but this has been discontinued lately owing to the silting up of the Alāipur *Khal* between Alāipur and Mānbhog. Khulnā is also connected by the Magurā service with Magurā in Jessore, and by the Boalmāri service with Boalmāri in Faridpur. Other steamer

services run from Khulnā to Lohāgarā in Jessore, and from Kapilmuni, along the Kabadak, to Kotchāndpur in Jessore, tapping the railway at Jhīngergāchā. Another line plying between Pirojpur and Nāzirpur touches at Kachua, and in the rainy season a service is opened from Mādāripur to Khulnā for jute traffic, passing along the Mādāripur *Bil* route.

RAIL- WAYS.

The central section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway connects Khulnā with Calcutta and the adjoining districts of Jessore, Nadiā and the 24-Parganas. The terminus is at Khulnā, and there are two other stations, Daulatpur and Phultalā, the length of the line in the district being about 13 miles. Proposals for extending the Bārā-at-Basirhāt light railway to Sātkhirā are under consideration.

ROADS

The district roads maintained by the District Board have a length of 535·6 miles, of which 508 miles are unmetalled and 27·6 miles are metalled, and there are also a number of village roads, with an aggregate length of 928 miles, under its control. These roads are all contained in the north of the district, and a reference to the map will show that the southern portion of the district is entirely without this means of communication—and necessarily so, as it is cut up in all directions by water-channels, which afford a more convenient means of transport. The following is an account of the more important roads.

In the Khulnā subdivision the most important road is that from Khulnā to Rājghāt on the northern boundary of the district; this is the old road to Jessore, but its importance has much decreased since the opening of the railway, which follows nearly the same line. Its length within the district is 17 miles, of which $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles are metalled. From Daulatpur on this road a long cross-country road, 33 miles long, has been made to Sātkhirā. Other important roads in this subdivision are the road from Khulnā to Bāgherhāt, 20 miles long, of which a little over half a mile near Bāgherhāt is metalled and the road from Tālā to Paikgāchā, 14 miles long. The other roads are mainly feeders of those mentioned above.

In the Sātkhirā subdivision the principal road is that from Sātkhirā to Chānduriā, 22 miles long. This is an important trade route, as it connects the *hāts* of Kadamtalā, Kalāroā, Sonāberīā and Chānduriā, and is much used for the transport of sugar, which is exported by water from Chānduriā. A continuation of this road runs from Sātkhirā to Bhomrā, a distance of 9 miles, and finally goes to Calcutta *via* Basirhāt and Bārāat; but the part of the road lying within this district is metalled. The only other roads calling for separate mention

in this part of the district are those from Alāipur to Debhātā (12 miles), from Kālīganj to Iswaripur (12½ miles), and from Sātkhirā to Budhātā (7½ miles).

In the Bāgherhāt subdivision the principal roads are the Khulnā-Bāgherhāt road already mentioned, which is continued to Bongong, and the road from Bāgherhāt to Rāmpāl (16 miles) with a continuation to Chāndpai, 4 miles further on. These two roads are connected by a cross-country road between Bāgherhāt and Rāmpāl. The majority of the roads in the subdivision are merely paths along the rivers and estuaries.

The district contains altogether 74 post offices and 478½ miles of postal communication. The number of postal articles delivered in 1906-07 was 2,879,396 including 1,564,888 post cards and 940,312 letters. The value of money orders issued in that year was Rs. 15,39,684, and of those paid Rs. 9,43,639. The total number of Savings Banks deposits was 7,012, the amount deposited being Rs. 5,61,614. There are five postal-telegraph offices situated at Khulnā, Bāgherhāt, Fakirhāt, Morrellganj and Sātkhirā, from which 11,000 telegraphic messages were issued in 1906-07.

POSTAL
COMMUNICA-
TIONS.

CHAPTER XI.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

REVENUE
HISTORY.
Mughal
rule.

DURING the period of Mughal rule the country appears to have been parcelled out among a few large zamindārs. The most influential of these zamindārs were the Rājās of Jessore or Chānchrā, the nucleus of whose estates consisted of *parganas* Saiyadpur, Amidpur, Mundāgāchā and Mallikpur, part of the territory wrested from Pratāpāditya. These *parganas* were granted to Bhabeswar Rai as a reward for his services in the war against that chief; and his descendants, especially Manohar Rai (1649—1705), extended the limits of the estate until it comprised nearly all the *parganas* now included in the district. It was finally divided into two portions by Sukh Deb Rai, who assigned a quarter share to his brother Syām Sundar Rai, on whose death without heirs it was resumed by the Nawāb and granted to a nobleman of his court named Salāh-ud-din Khān. This latter estate was composed principally of lands in *parganas* Saiyadpur and Sāhos and was known as the Saiyadpur zamindāri. The three-quarters share which the Rājā of Jessore retained was called the Yusafpur estate, after the name of the principal *pargana* included in it. It extended over the whole country between the Bhairab and Passur rivers on the east almost up to the Ichhāmati on the west, while its northern limit was the tract through which the high road ran from Calcutta to Dacca. The greater part of the district was included in these two estates, but there were also a few smaller properties not absorbed by them, which belonged to different families. The largest extended over *parganas* Hoglā and Belphulā, while another was included in *pargana* Sultānpur-Kharariā. There were other smaller properties scattered over the district, but they were rather fragments of larger properties, which had been separated by purchase or grant, and not estates which had always had a separate existence.

There was this further distinction that the zamindārs in possession had no share in the administration like the larger landholders. At the same time, the latter appear to have been rather

This account of the revenue history of the district has been compiled from Sir James Westland's *Report on the District of Jessore*

contractors for land revenue than actual owners of landed estates paying revenue to Government. Thus, we find that Manohar Rai was given authority to collect and pay in the revenue of the smaller estates in his neighbourhood, and that he gradually acquired a large property by paying up arrears when the small zamindars defaulted and by engaging for its future payment. The same method of aggrandizement was followed by his son, so that apparently the revenue of the smaller estates was paid through the owners of the large zamindaris, who could acquire them in case of default by paying up the arrears and engaging for the future.

When the *Ducan* of Bengal, which included the administration of civil justice as well as the collection of revenue, was conferred upon the East India Company in 1765, it was not at first considered advisable to entrust the immediate management of the latter to European officers, who had had no experience of its intricacies. But in 1769 Supervisors were appointed by Mr. Verelst with powers of supervision over the native officers employed in collecting the revenue and administering justice in different parts of the country; and in 1770 Councils, with superior authority, were established at Murshidabad and Patna. The Supervisors were instructed to obtain full information regarding the produce and capacity of the land, to give details not only of the revenue, but also of the cesses or other demands made from the cultivators, and to report on the regulation of commerce and the administration of justice. The information elicited by these enquiries showed that the internal government was in a state of profound disorder, and that the people were suffering great oppression. Nevertheless, seven years elapsed from the acquisition of the *Ducan* before the Government deemed itself competent to remedy these defects. It was not till 1772 that the Court of Directors resolved to "stand forth as *Ducan*, and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenue." A Board of Revenue was accordingly appointed at Calcutta, the Supervisors were given the designation of Collectors, and a native officer styled *Ducan*, who was chosen by the Board, was associated with each Collector in the control of revenue affairs. The European officers were recalled, however, in 1774, and native agents (*amils*) appointed in their stead. It was not till 1786 that a European Collector was again appointed for each district, the first in Jessore being Mr. Henokell, who was vested with the united powers of Collector, Civil Judge and Magistrate.

EARLY
BRITISH
ADMINIS-
TRATION.

The north of the district, in common with other districts of Bengal, was settled in the year 1772 for a term of five years, on the expiry of which yearly settlements were made with the zamindars till the Decennial Settlement of 1790. When the settlement of 1772 was made, it was based on the enquiries made by an officer named Mr. Lane, whom the Committee of Revenue had deputed to make an estimate of the zamindars' assets. No further enquiry was made, and when the task of making the yearly settlements devolved upon the Collector, he had few settled principles and little detailed information to help him. He not unnaturally made a rough calculation, and got the zamindar to undertake to pay as much as he could be made to consent to. If no amicable settlement could be arrived at, the zamindar was temporarily ousted, and the Collector tried by direct collections to realize the estimated revenue. The same course was adopted in case of arrears, and the defaulting zamindar was also liable to be put into jail, the sale of estates for arrears being apparently an expedient which had not been thought of at the time. In one case at least the authorities followed the old Mughal plan, when the zamindars of the Sultanpur estate defaulted in payment of the demand. They were dispossessed, and the estate was transferred to one Kāsi Nāth Datta on his paying up the arrears and engaging to pay the revenue accruing in future.

The annual settlements of land revenue, based on such imperfect data, resulted in an increased assessment every year and operated very harshly upon the zamindars. Many were plunged in debt, and their embarrassment reacted on their tenants, from whom they squeezed as much as they could get. "The zamindars," writes Sir James Westland, "uncertain of to-morrow, and having little enough for to-day, fell back on the ryots and determined to get the utmost out of them; they were pinched in their turn, and progress of any sort was rendered impossible. No ryot would improve his land or extend his cultivation when he knew that the zamindar would at once demand all the advantage that might accrue; and no zamindar would attempt improvement of his estate when he knew the certain result would be an increased demand, and an indeterminately increased demand, on the part of the Collector. The mutual distrust between Government, zamindar and ryot—the natural consequence of an annual settlement system, especially where no principles were laid down as a basis to work upon—barred all progress, and remedy was loudly called for."

In 1790 the Decennial Settlement was carried out by Mr. Rocks, who had succeeded Mr. Henckell the year before, and

was declared permanent in 1793. This settlement, as is well known, was a great advance upon the previous system, and involved a great deal more than a mere settlement of the revenue to be paid by zamindārs. Hitherto, at each settlement the assets of the estate had been estimated; and the zamindār retained the produce of his rent-free lands, together with a suitable but not accurately defined allowance, and handed over the remainder to the Government. A fixed demand was now settled, and at the same time the zamindārs were bound in their turn to make a similar settlement with their ryots, so that the profits from extension of cultivation and from the settlement of new ryots would be enjoyed by the zamindār, while the profits from the improvement of each ryot's holding would be obtained by the ryot himself.

PERMA-
NENT
SETTLE-
MENT.

Another important change of system consisted in the separation of dependent *talukdars*. These were a class of minor zamindārs created by, and paying their revenue through, the regular zamindārs. The *taluks* were of two classes, *pattā*, i.e., founded upon a lease or *patta*, and *kharcā*, i.e., purchased. In either case they had been created by the zamindār, who, in return for an adequate consideration, made over to the *talukdār* almost his entire rights in a small portion of his estate, subject to the payment of an annual rent. In this way zamindārs anxious to realize money had granted away large portions of their estates either rent-free or on quit-rent tenures. Government now ordered that these grants should be separated from the parent estate, i.e., instead of paying their revenue to the zamindār, the *talukdars* should pay it direct to Government. They were thus placed on the footing of other zamindārs, but those who were bound by their engagements to pay revenue through the zamindārs only, were held not to be entitled to separation. Another change effected at the same time was the abolition of *saib* dues, i.e., duties levied at *hāts* or markets upon goods brought for sale.

Apart from these and a few other circumstances, the basis of the settlement was the settlement of the previous year or the Collector's calculations, which were accepted for all but the largest estates, in respect of which the Board went into details, and somewhat modified his estimate. That the terms were not very favourable to the zamindārs, will be seen from the figures showing the settlements of the largest estates, Yusaifpur being settled at Rs. 3,02,372 or about Rs. 5,000 more than the demand of the previous year, while the Saiyadpur estate was made to pay Rs. 90,583 or Rs. 2,000 more than the previous year. Some of

the zamīndārs, the zamīndār of Yusufpur particularly, fought hard for a modification of the terms proposed, but finally had to accept them. In the end, most of the great zamīndār families were ruined and lost their estates owing to several causes. The assessment was too high, and the entire assets could not be realized, as the ryots were too strong and the law too weak for the zamīndārs. While the law insisted upon the immediate payment of the full amount demanded from the latter, it placed in their hands the most insufficient means of collecting their dues. For, if any ryot failed to pay his rent, they had to go through the dilatory, expensive, and by no means certain process of suing him in court and executing a decree against him—if the ryot had not meantime taken advantage of the delay and absconded. Lastly, the Permanent Settlement, by declaring estates to be the zamīndārs' property, but transferable by sale, had facilitated their transference to creditors. The zamīndārs before the settlement were many of them in debt, and now some at least had to part with their lands to meet their creditors' demands.

The general result may be gathered from the fact that, according to a report made by the Collector in 1800, no less than 1,000 estates were in arrears. Among the zamīndars who were ruined was the largest landholder in the district, Rājā Srikānta Rai of Yusufpur, who lost one by one the *parganas* making up his estate and was reduced to beggary. The proprietors of other estates were no more fortunate. *Pargana* Hoglea was sold up in 1796, and *pargana* Belphuliā was several times put up to sale. Of all the large zamīndaris in the district only two appear to have withstood the ordeal of the first ten years after the Permanent Settlement, viz., the Saiyadpur estate, now known as the Trust Estate, and Sultanpur, which had been acquired by Kāsi Nāth Datta in the manner already mentioned. The necessity of finding a remedy for this state of affairs at length pressed itself upon the attention of Government; and by Regulation VII of 1799 the zamīndārs were given greater facilities for realizing rents from the ryots. But this measure was carried only after many zamīndārs had been ruined.

RESUMPTION
PROCEEDINGS.

The most important event in the subsequent revenue history of the district was the resumption of estates. At the time of the Permanent Settlement large areas were claimed as revenue-free (*lakṣhirāj*), and the authority to scrutinize such revenue-free grants, and if invalid, to annex them, was specially reserved. The grants were divided into two classes—*lādshāhī* and *kukūmi*, the former being those that were granted by the Mughal Emperor direct, and the latter by the officials of the Emperor. Regulation

XXXVII of 1793 dealt with *bādshāhi* grants, and Regulation **XIX** of the same year with the others. *Bādshāhi* grants were recognized as valid (*bāhālī*), if the holder could prove his *sanad* was hereditary and was in possession. *Hakumi* grants, though in their nature invalid, were accepted as valid if dated prior to 1765. All grants of a subsequent date were invalid and were resumed (*bāziṣṭī*), but those given between 1765 and 1790 were accorded a privileged rate of assessment. By Regulation **XIX** all revenue-free grants made by zamindārs after 1790 were invalidated, and zamindārs were authorized to nullify their own grants.

No practical steps were taken to give effect to these Regulations when they were passed, but in 1800 an attempt was made to introduce compulsory registration of *lākhirāj* grants. It proved abortive, and by Regulation **II** of 1819, the power of resumption was transferred from the Civil to the Revenue Courts. That Regulation was supplemented by Regulation **III** of 1824, which appointed an executive agency, in the person of a special Commissioner, to give practical effect to the policy of Government. Under his supervision, resumption proceedings were systematically undertaken between the years 1830 and 1850. By these means a large number of estates were added to the revenue-roll.

The history of the revenue administration of the Sundarbans requires separate treatment, as it is entirely different from that of the rest of the district. A sketch of the measures taken in the early part of the 19th century has been given in Chapter II, from which it will be seen that in 1828 Government asserted its exclusive right to this tract, and followed up this declaration by the survey of Lieutenant Hodges. Some years before, in 1822-23, Mr. Prinsep had divided all the land between the river Jamunā and the Hooghly into blocks, which he numbered. Hodges similarly divided all the forest as far as the river Passur into blocks, but revised the numbering, so as to reduce the whole of his and Prinsep's blocks into a series numbered from 1 to 236. The aggregate area of these 236 "Sundarban lots" was computed at 1,702,120 acres or 2,660 square miles. The forest line having been authoritatively determined, it became necessary to deal with the lands which had been already reclaimed and were held free of land revenue, i.e., to resume

SUNDAR-
BAN AD-
MINISTRA-
TION.

This account of the early revenue administration of the Sundarbans has been prepared from an article by Mr. Pargiter's *Cameos of Indian Districts—The Sundarbans*, Calcutta Review, 1889.

and settle them. Extensive tracts were recovered by Government, and as fast as each estate was resumed, it was brought under settlement.

In 1830 rules for the grant of the forest area were issued, and land was eagerly taken up. Applications poured in, mostly from Europeans resident in Calcutta, who had sanguine expectations of successful exploitation. Their anticipations were not unreasonable, for with the exception of some lands reserved for the Salt Department, applicants practically got gratis whatever they asked for in the 24-Parganas and Khulnā. During the two years 1830 and 1831, 98 lots were granted away, and twelve more during the next 5 years, the total area of the grants being 551,520 acres. The grants were made in perpetuity at a rental of about Re. 1-8 per acre, and nothing was payable during the first 20 years, but it was prescribed that one-fourth of the area should be rendered fit for cultivation within 5 years, under pain of the grant being forfeited to Government. This condition was laid down to ensure that the grantees should carry out the work of reclamation, for which they had received the land. No regular grants could be made in the eastern part of the Sundarbans, for no detailed survey had yet been made of the forest lands there.

Though such a large area had been settled, a considerable portion was never brought under cultivation, and consequently lapsed to Government. Some of the persons who got grants were mere speculators; they did not attempt to clear their lands, but realized whatever profit they could get from the wood and other natural products; and they sold the lots as soon as they could find a purchaser, so that having acquired the grants free of cost, they made a profitable speculation. In a few cases the grantees complied at once with the condition requiring clearance, but in rather more than one-third of the lots the difficulties and losses experienced proved insuperable to the grantees, who in consequence virtually gave up the undertaking, so that the Government was obliged to cancel their grants. In fact, few grantees were able to succeed who had not ample capital at their command. The work of reclamation required unceasing care and vigilance, for desertion among the ryots left the lands fallow and unremunerative, till fresh ryots could be engaged at heavy expense; and if the embankment chanced to be breached, salt water poured in and ruined the soil with a deposit of salt. The first allotment moreover was, in a measure, a matter of luck, for as each lot was given to the first applicant, the best lots were taken up by the earliest applicants. Until some progress was

made in the lots bordering on the cultivated tracts, it was almost hopeless for a grantee, whose land lay deeper in the forest, to succeed in his undertaking, however great his capital might be.

In these circumstances, the grantees petitioned Government for more liberal terms, and it was at last realised that the grant rules of 1830 were not a success. They were accordingly modified and were re published in September 1853. Grants were to be made for 99 years, and were sold to the highest bidder if there was competition. The revenue assessed on them was reduced to about 6 annas per acre, and even this full rate (low as it was) did not become payable till the 51st year, after a long and very gradual enhancement commencing from the 21st year. But reclamation was more carefully provided for, and the grantee was required to have one eighth of his grant fit for cultivation in 5 years, one-fourth in 10 years, one-half in 20 years, and practically the whole in 30 years, under pain of forfeiture. The earlier grantees were allowed the option of giving up their old leases and taking fresh leases under the new rules. This concession was highly appreciated, and about seventy of the earlier grantees accepted it and commuted their leases. The new rules gave a fresh stimulus to the reclamation of the Sundarbans, and there was no difficulty in granting out lands, for surveyors had been employed continuously from the year 1810 and had made partial surveys of all the accessible lands, besides which, all such lands in Khulna and Backergunge were surveyed and mapped out in the course of the revenue survey during the years 1857 to 1863. Altogether, 157,990 acres are now held under the rules of 1853.

The rules of 1853 were virtually superseded by several sets of sale rules issued after 1862, but as the latter proved inoperative, a revised set of lease rules was published in 1879. Under those rules the grants made are of two classes, viz, (1) blocks of 200 acres or more leased to large capitalists who are prepared to spend time and money in developing them; and (2) plots not exceeding 200 acres leased to small capitalists for clearance by cultivators.

The "large capitalist rules" differ from the rules of 1853 in providing a rent-free period of only ten years, and in laying down only one clearance condition, viz, that one-eighth of the entire grant shall be rendered fit for cultivation at the end of the 5th year. This condition may be enforced either by forfeiture of the grant or by the issue of a fresh lease, omitting the remainder of the rent-free period, and requiring payment of rent at enhanced rates during the term of the grant. The rules also provide for gradually increasing rates of assessment after

Rules of
1853.

Large
capitalist
rules.

the expiration of the rent-free period, and varying rates within different tracts according to the rent-paying capabilities of the land. It is further provided that there shall be constantly recurring renewals of the lease on resettlement. The term of the original lease is fixed at 40 years, and resettlements are to be made after periods of 30 years, maximum rates being laid down for each resettlement. The maximum area of a grant is restricted to 5,000 *bighās*, the minimum being 200 *bighās*. Cultivation must not be scattered all over the area of the land, but proceed regularly through the blocks. Leases are to be sold at an upset price of Re. 1 an acre, when there is only one applicant, and to the highest bidder, when there are more than one. The leases confer an occupancy right, hereditary and transferable. Rights of way and water and other easements are reserved. The right of using all navigable streams and towpaths not less than 25 feet wide on each side of every such stream is also reserved to the public; while Government reserves to itself the right to all minerals in the land, together with rights of way and other reasonable facilities for working, getting at, and carrying away such minerals. No charge is made for timber on the land at the time it is leased, nor for any that may be cut or burnt to effect clearances or that may be used on the land; but a duty is levied on any exported for sale.

Small
capitalist
rules

Under "the small capitalist rules" plots of land below 200 *bighās* are given to small settlers, guaranteeing them a formal lease for 30 years, if the lands are brought under cultivation within two years. The 30 years' lease allows a rent-free term of two years, with progressive rates of rent on the cultivated area, fixed with reference to rates paid in the neighbourhood by ryots to landholders for similar lands. If available, an area of unreclaimed land equal to the cultivated area is included in the lease, and in addition, the lessee can bring under cultivation any quantity of land adjoining his holding which he may find *bona fide* unoccupied. The holding is liable to measurement every five years, and all cultivated land in excess of the area originally assessed can be assessed at the same rate. After 30 years, renewed leases can be given for 30 years' periods, and rates of assessment can be adjusted at each renewal with reference to rates then prevailing in the neighbourhood. The tenure is heritable and transferable, provided that notice of transfer is given within one month, and no holding is to be divided without permission. No charge is made for wood and timber on the grant, nor for any cut or burnt in making clearances, or used on the land; but a duty is levied on any exported for sale.

Experience has shown that the system followed has not been a success, and it has been condemned on the ground that it caused a heavy loss of revenue, afforded no adequate control over the landlords, and encouraged a system of sub-infeudation, by which middlemen are introduced between the original grantee and the cultivator. Land-jobbers and speculators obtained leases for the purpose of re-selling them. In order to recoup his initial outlay, the original lessee often sub-let to smaller lessees in return for cash payments. And the same process was carried on lower down the chain, with the result that the land was eventually reclaimed and cultivated by peasant cultivators paying rack-rents. It was accordingly decided in 1904 to abandon this system and to introduce a system of ryotwari settlement as an experimental measure, i.e., small areas will be let out to actual cultivators, assistance being given them by Government in the form of advances, as well as by constructing tanks and embankments and clearing the jungle for them. The existing rules for the lease of waste lands have been suspended in the meanwhile. In Khulna, however, almost the whole of the area available for settlement has been already leased to capitalists.

The following table shows the area already settled, with the amount of revenue payable, and the area remaining to be settled in the Khulna Sundarbans.—

Description	Area in acres.	Revenue	
		Present	Eventual.
		Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Permanently settled estates .	61,081.27	38,052 7 9	46,050 7 9
Estates settled under the rules of 1853 ...	121,159	31,107 0 0	35,780 0 0
Estates settled under the large capitalist rules ..	36,696	9,532 0 0	22,209 0 0
Estates settled under the small capitalist rules	11,842	14,729 0 0	14,916 0 0
Estates settled under the Regulation and other Acts	82,152.25	90,003 7 4	90,144 7 4
Redeemed estates	12,901.98	"	"
Waste lands remaining to be settled	3,852.51
Reserved Forest ...	1,090,727.54
TOTAL ...	1,40,312.58	1,84,323 15 1	2,09,099 15 1

It remains to note that by a special enactment, Regulation IX of 1816, the revenue administration of the Sundarbans was at

first placed in the hands of an officer designated a Commissioner in the Sundarbans, who was directly under the Board of Revenue. In the year 1905 that Regulation was repealed by Bengal Act I of 1905, and the Sundarbans area was parcelled out into three parts, one being amalgamated with the district of Backergunge, one with the 24-Parganas, and the third with Khulna. The Collectors of these three districts now manage all matters connected with the revenue administration of the tract lying in their respective jurisdictions; and the settlement-holders of the estates comprised in the Sundarbans pay the land revenue fixed at periodical settlements, in one or two instalments, into the treasuries at Barisal, Alipore or Khulna, the headquarters stations of the three districts concerned.

ESTATES.

At the time of the Permanent Settlement the whole district of Jessore contained only 122 estates, and the number must therefore have been still smaller in this district. The number, however, subsequently rose enormously, the district on its creation in 1882 receiving 971 revenue-paying estates, of which 770 were permanently settled, 179 temporarily settled and 22 held under the direct management of Government; there were also 31 revenue-free estates. This increase was due, in a large measure, to the Permanent Settlement, both because a number of *taluks* were made separate estates, and also because in the 10 years following its completion, when the large estates began to fall in arrears, it was not the practice to sell up each estate entirely but only a portion, the purchase money of which would be enough to meet the arrear. The large estates being thus parcelled out into shares and sold to the highest bidder, a large number of small estates were created. For instance, the Yusafpur estate alone, which was held by Rājā Srikānta Rai, was divided three years after the settlement into 100 large and 39 small estates, and sold to as many proprietors. The number of estates was subsequently increased still further as the result of the resumption proceedings.

Excepting the Sundarbans tract, the whole district is permanently settled. The number of permanently settled estates in the district is now 781 and that of temporarily settled estates 199, while 40 estates are under direct management of Government, of which 22 are the property of Government and the rest of proprietors. The revenue-free estates number 61, and there are 52,342 tenures and under-tenures registered in the road cess office, besides 6,081 rent-free lands, which are also tenures. Unlike the rest of the district, the Sundarbans tract is not permanently settled, and includes 171 estates, which are periodically settled.

In some of these estates Government is the proprietor, the settlement-holder being *mālikuzdār*, and in others settlement-holders have proprietary interests.

The proprietors of estates are known as *zamindars* or *tālukdārs*, the latter being generally petty land-holders, who reside on their estates, while the larger proprietors are generally non-resident. The *tāluk*s have their origin in the separation of portions of estates, the zamindars having disposed of them by sale, gift or otherwise. The persons who obtained possession of such separated portions of zamindaris either paid their quota of revenue through the zamindars or direct to the public treasury. The exactions of the zamindars soon obliged them, however, to obtain recognition as owners of distinct estates. The separated portions came to be known as *tāluk*s, and the holders as independent *tālukdārs* having rights, privileges and responsibilities in all respects similar to those of the zamindars, the difference consisting in origin only.

The proprietors of estates have freely exercised the power of **TENURES** alienation and have created a large number of tenures, such as *patni*, *ṭāras* and *gānthis*. In creating these tenures, and even in giving a lease for a term of years, it has been and is a common practice for the tenure-holder to pay a bonus or premium, which discounts the contingency of many years' increased rent. The system, while meeting the zamindar's present necessity, means a loss to his posterity, because it is clear that if the bonus were not exacted, a higher rental could be obtained permanently from the land. The process of sub-infeudation has not terminated with the *patnidārs*, *ṭāradārs* and *gānthidārs*. There are lower gradations of tenures under them called *darpatnis*, *darjārās* and *dargānthis*, and even further subordinate tenures called *sejāntnis*, *sejānthis*, etc. Many of the under-tenures are of petty size and were originally ryoti holdings. The present holders having in course of time acquired the status of under-tenure-holders, now collect rents from the ryots as middlemen and pay them over to the superior landlords, keeping some profit for themselves.

In many cases entire estates are in the direct possession of *patnidārs* or *gānthidārs*, but there are also instances in which portions of estates are directly under the proprietors, the remaining portions being held by tenure-holders. Landlord's private lands are called *khās khāmār* or *āmānat khāmār*, and are cultivated either by his own men or hired labourers, or by cultivators, called *bargidārs*, who give half the produce to the landlord. The following is a brief account of the principal tenures.

Ganthi. Tenure-holders holding directly under zamindars are known as *talukdars* or *ganthidars*, and when holding under revenue-paying *talukdars* as *ganthidars*. The word *ganthi* means assigned or allotted, and probably such tenures were originally created by the zamindars for the reclamation of waste land; but in process of time the term came to be applied to any tenure held immediately under a proprietor or independent *talukdar*. These tenures are heritable and transferable, and the *ganthidars* have freely exercised their power to create under-tenures. There are several grades of under-tenure-holders below them called *darganthidars*, *seganthidars*, etc., down to nine degrees. Some *ganthi* tenures are, *muharrari*, i.e., tenures held at a fixed rent, and others are *maurasi*, i.e., hereditary tenures.

Taluks
and
hawals

Taluks are tenures chiefly found in the east and south of the district, which correspond to the *ganthis* of the old settled tracts. In this part of the district, especially in the Salimabad *pargana* of the Bagherhat subdivision, sub-infeudation has been carried to extreme lengths, and there is a great variety of intermediate tenures between the *talukdar* and the actual cultivator, such as *ausat-taluk hawalā*, *ausat-hawalā*, *nim-hawalā*, and *nim-ausat-hawalā*. The word *ausat* means subordinate, and signifies a dependent tenure, while the word *nim* generally indicates that the tenure is a subdivision of the parent tenure. A *hawalā* signifies literally a charge, and is found, in the chain of subordination, either direct under the zamindar or under the *talukdar*. The *hawalā* tenure may be created by the zamindar, if he has not already created a *talukdar*, and in this case a *talukdar* subsequently created will take position between the *hawaladar* and the zamindar. The rights of a *talukdar*, however, include that of creating *hawalās* within his own tenure; and the *hawaladar*, again, may create a subordinate tenure called *nim-hawalā*, and may subsequently create an *ausat-hawalā*, intermediate between himself and the *nim-hawaladar*. This species of under-tenure originated from the circumstance that the zamindars or *talukdars*, unable to clear the large tracts of unreclaimed lands included in their properties, divided them into lots, placing each lot in the *hawalā* or charge of an individual and conceding to him some proprietary rights; and as reclamation proceeded, the latter in his turn began to sublet.

In the Sundarbans the term *taluk* has a meaning different from that in the north of the district, for the Sundarbans grants are themselves called *taluks*, and their possessors are *talukdars*. Here are found reclamation tenures granted for the clearance of jungle, called *jungalburi*, *abadkari* or *patitabadi*. They are permanent tenures, held exempt from the payment of revenue for a period,

subject to a specific *xamd* (assessment) for lands brought under cultivation.

The *patni taluks* are a class of tenures which originated in the estate of the Mahārājā of Burdwan. At the Permanent Settlement the assessment of the estate was very high, and in order to ensure easy and punctual realization of the rent, a number of leases in perpetuity to be held at a fixed rent were given to a large number of middlemen. These tenures are known as *patni* (literally dependent) *taluks*, and are in effect leases which bind the holders by terms and conditions similar to those by which superior landlords are bound to the State. A large number were created in this district and in Jessore after the enactment of Regulation VIII of 1819, known as the Patni Sale Law, which declared the validity of such permanent tenures, defined the relative rights of the zamindars and their subordinate *patni talukdars*, established a summary process for the sale of such tenures in satisfaction of the zamindar's demand of rent, and also legalized under-letting, on similar terms, by the *patnidars* and others. Since the passing of this law the *patni* tenure has been very popular with zamindars who wish to divest themselves of the direct management of their property or part of it, or who wish to raise money in the shape of a bonus. It may be described as a tenure created by the zamindar to be held by the lessee and his heirs or transferees for ever at a rent fixed in perpetuity, subject to the liability of annulment on sale of the parent estate for arrears of the Government revenue, unless protected against the rights exercisable by auction-purchasers by common or special registry, as prescribed by sections 37 and 39 of Act XI of 1859. The tenant is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent and for his conduct generally, or he is excused from this obligation at the zamindar's discretion.

Under-tenures created by *patnidars* are called *darpatni*, and those created by *darpatnidars* are called *sepatni* tenures. These under-tenures are, like the parent tenures, permanent, transferable and heritable; and have generally the same rights, privileges and responsibilities attached to them. They are usually granted on payment of a bonus. Section 13 of Regulation VIII of 1819 provides rules for staying the sale of a *patni*, if it takes place owing to the intentional withholding of payment of rent by the *patnidar* with the object of ruining his subordinate tenure-holders. In such cases the under-tenants are allowed the means of saving the *patni* tenure and their own under-tenures by paying into the Collector's office the advertised balance due to the zamindar. The *patni* tenure so preserved forms the necessary

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security to the depositors, who have a lien on it in the same manner as if the loan had been made upon mortgage. The depositors may then apply to the Collector for obtaining immediate possession of the defaulter's tenure; and the defaulter will not recover his tenure, "except upon repayment of the entire sum advanced, with interest at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum up to the date of possession having been given, or upon exhibiting proof, in a regular suit to be instituted for the purpose, that the full amount so advanced, with interest, has been realized from the usufruct of the tenure."

RENT-
FREE
AND
SERVICE
LANDS.

The holders of rent free lands are called *nishkar-bhogi*. They are tenure-holders under *zamindars* or *talukdars*, and are liable to pay road and public works cesses only, which they realize from their ryots while collecting rents. Most tenure holders of this class pay the assessed cesses direct to Government, but in some cases payment is made through the proprietors. The rent-free lands are heritable and transferable by sale, gift or mortgage like other tenures. There are also service tenures in this district designated *chakran*, which are heritable, but not transferable.

RYOTS

Occupancy ryots or ryots at fixed rents or fixed rates of rent are called *kāmu kushi prajā* and the non-occupancy ryots *prajā*. Resident cultivators are known as *shulkash prajā* and non-resident ryots as *pankash prajā*, holders of homestead lands as *bhutabari prajā*, and under-ryots as *kusfa prajā*. It is reported that holdings of ryots of the first two classes are being freely transferred by sale, 703 ryots' holdings at fixed rates of rent and 1,392 occupancy ryots' holdings being sold during the year 1906.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

THE administration of the district is in charge of the Collector under the Commissioner of the Presidency Division. For administrative purposes it is divided into three subdivisions with headquarters at Khulna, Bāgherhāt and Satkhira. The headquarters subdivision is under the direct supervision of the Collector, who has a staff of four Deputy Collectors, with one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors, while the Bāgherhāt and Satkhira subdivisions are each in charge of a Subdivisional Officer, generally a member of the Provincial Civil Service, assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector. Settlement operations in the Sundarbans are controlled by a special Deputy Collector with headquarters at Calcutta. Khulna is also the headquarters of a Deputy Conservator of Forests in charge of the Sundarbans Division, who is assisted by an Assistant Conservator and an Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests.

The revenue of the district, under the main heads, was Rs. 6,23,000 in 1882-83, when the district was first constituted. It rose to Rs. 11,48,000 in 1890-91 and to Rs. 12,21,000 in 1900-01. In 1906-07 it amounted to Rs. 15,19,000, of which Rs. 6,92,000 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 4,57,000 from stamps, Rs. 2,25,000 from cesses, Rs. 1,12,000 from excise, and Rs. 33,000 from income-tax.

The collections of land revenue increased from Rs. 3,91,000 in 1882-83 to Rs. 6,44,000 in 1890-91 and to Rs. 6,69,000 in 1900-01. In 1906-07 they amounted to Rs. 6,92,000 collected from 1,020 estates. The gradual increase is attributed to enhancements obtained from temporarily settled estates in the Sundarbans; and the revenue from this source is expected to increase still further as land is reclaimed and improved. Altogether 781 estates with a current demand of Rs. 5,12,000 are permanently settled, and 203 estates with a demand of Rs. 1,74,000 are temporarily settled, while there are 36 estates, with a demand of Rs. 31,000, held direct by Government.

Stamps. Next to land revenue, the most important source of revenue is the sale of stamps, the receipts from which amounted to Rs. 2,99,000 in 1895-96, and averaged Rs. 3,35,000 per annum in the quinquennium ending in 1899-1900. During the five years ending in 1904-05 the annual receipts averaged Rs. 3,86,000, and in 1906-07 they were Rs. 4,57,000, as against Rs. 3,21,500 in 1896-97. The increase is almost entirely due to the greater sale of judicial stamps caused by the growth in the number and value of rent and civil suits.

Cesses. Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The collections increased from Rs. 1,56,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 1,64,000 in 1900-01, and to Rs. 2,27,000 in 1906-07. The current demand in the year last named was Rs. 2,28,000, of which the greater part (Rs. 2,00,000) was due from 1,698 revenue-paying estates, while Rs. 9,500 were payable by 61 revenue-free estates, and Rs. 12,500 by 6,081 rent-free lands. The number of estates assessed to cesses is 7,840, and the number of recorded shareholders is 7,589. There are 52,342 tenures assessed to cesses with 61,856 shareholders; and the number of tenures is thus nearly seven times that of estates. The total demand of cesses (Rs. 2,28,000) is nearly equal to a third of the demand of land revenue (Rs. 7,17,000).

Excise. The next important source of revenue is excise, the receipts from which increased from Rs. 70,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 1,12,000 in 1906-07—a total lower than in any other district in the Presidency Division except Jessore. Over a third of this sum was obtained from the duty and license fees levied on *ganja*, i.e., the unimpregnated dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis indica*) and the resinous exudation on them; the amount thus realized was Rs. 41,260 in 1906-07. The total incidence of the revenue accruing from hemp drugs was only Rs. 338 for every 10,000, and the number of shops licensed to sell by retail was one to every 16,487 persons.

After *ganja* the largest item in the excise revenue consists of the receipts from the sale of country spirit, which in that year realized Rs. 33,055 or nearly a third of the total. The manufacture and sale of country spirit are carried on under what is known as the contract supply system, which was introduced in 1906. Under this system the local manufacture of country spirit has been prohibited, and a contract has been made with a firm of distillers for its supply. The contractors are forbidden to hold any retail licenses for the sale of the spirit, but are allowed the use of distillery and denat buildings for the

storage of liquor. The spirit is brought from the distillers to the various depôts, and is there blended and reduced to certain fixed strengths, at which alone it may be supplied to retail vendors and sold by the latter to consumers. The receipts from the license fees and duty on this spirit are less than in any other district in the Presidency Division except Jessore, representing Rs. 297 per 10,000, as compared with Rs. 3,716 for the Division and Rs. 2,147 for the whole of Bengal. There are altogether 37 shops licensed for its sale, i.e., one retail shop to every 56·1 square miles and 33,866 persons; the average consumption of the liquor is 4 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population, and the incidence of taxation is only 5 pies per head of the population.

The receipts from opium account for practically all the remainder of the excise revenue, amounting in 1906-07 to Rs. 32,167 or Rs. 256 per 10,000 of the population, as against the average of Rs. 907 returned for the Presidency Division and Rs. 463 for the whole of Bengal.

In 1896-97 the income-tax yielded Rs. 32,000 paid by 1,760 Income-tax assesses, and in 1901-02 the amount derived from the tax had increased to Rs. 46,000 and the number of assesses to 2,493. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised to Rs. 1,000 in 1903, thereby affording relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks. The number of assesses consequently fell in 1903 to 689 and the collections to Rs. 30,000. In 1906-07 the tax brought in Rs. 33,179 paid by 744 assesses.

There are 13 offices for the registration of assurances under Registration Act III of 1877. In the five years 1895-99 the average number

Name.	Documents registered	Receipts	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Khulná	6,581	11,529	4,274
Ditto joint at Khulná	3,221	3,748	2,133
Bagehat	5,158	4,523	1,724
Ditto joint (Kachua)	1,641	1,355	1,431
Dumris	4,541	3,857	2,720
Kakra	3,576	2,940	1,695
Kahganj	4,210	3,529	2,329
Misra	3,901	3,131	3,194
McNahit	3,101	2,685	1,807
Morreiganj	6,053	5,083	2,300
Paikgohat	2,082	2,378	1,067
Rampal	3,017	2,583	2,040
Rezkhira	3,955	3,631	2,303
Total	51,630	49,903	32,696

of documents registered annually was 44,580, and in the next quinquennium (1900-04) it was 43,600. In 1907 the number rose to 51,630 as shown in the marginal statement, which gives the salient statistics for that year. This large increase is ascribed to the high prices prevailing in the district and to an unusual demand for land among jute cultivators, who have found such cultivation more profitable than that of paddy.

**ADMINIS-
TRATION
OF
JUSTICE.**
Civil
justice.

Khulnā was included within the jurisdiction of the District and Sessions Judge of Jessore until 1908, when a separate District Judge was appointed. The local civil courts are those of two Sub Judges at Khulna and of nine Munsifs, of whom two sit at Khulna, three at Bāgherhāt and four at Sātkhirā.

**Criminal
justice.**

Criminal justice is administered by the District Magistrate and the various Magistrates subordinate to him. The sanctioned staff at Khulnā consists, in addition to the District Magistrate, of three Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these officers, one or two Sub-Deputy Magistrates with third class powers are generally posted to the headquarters station. The Subdivisional Officers of Bāgherhāt and Sātkhirā are almost invariably Magistrates of the first class, and are generally assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate vested with second or third class powers. In addition to the stipendiary Magistrates, there are Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Khulnā, Bāgherhāt and Sātkhirā.

Crime.

Except in the extreme east of the district, where some degree of lawlessness regarding land and women is common, there is no particular tendency to crime among the population. Some years ago, the inhabitants of the Morrellganj thana in the Bāgherhāt subdivision had an evil reputation for turbulence, and cases of rioting with deadly weapons were frequent, particularly during the rice harvesting season. The number of such cases has however decreased considerably of late years. Agrarian crime is most common in the *dhads* or Sundarbans clearings, which have become a byword for land disputes and riots. The outpost at Dakupi was especially established a few years ago to check the increasing volume of crime in these parts. Counterfeit coining has gone on for some time, and recently some members of a gang of professional coiners known as Baurias from Marwar in Rajputāna were arrested and convicted.

The form of crime most characteristic of the district is river dacoity; but much of the crime on the waterways is not reported. For instance, during a period of 5 years (1900-04) only 12 river dacoities were reported, but it was subsequently discovered that at least 34 such dacoities had been committed, but not brought to light. It is, moreover, the worst district of all those affected by riverain conditions for losses of jute and rice cargoes, the waters in the neighbourhood of Khulnā, Alāipur, Kālīganj and Bāgherhāt being particularly notorious in this respect. There are six well-known gangs of professional criminals, numbering in all about 500 persons, which appear to be composed of the

following classes:—(1) Hired *lathials* from Jessore, hired during the paddy-cutting season. (2) Dacoits banded together in gangs of 20 to 25, who man light fast-going boats and attack empty boats, the *mānchis* of which carry cash for the purchase of grain or the proceeds of its sale. (3) Dacoits who cut the anchor ropes of grain-laden boats and allow the boat to drift down to opposite their village, whence *dungis* put off and take the grain. (4) Mixed gangs of Barisal and Khulnā Muhammadan *bādmāshes*, and the Sāth Bhaiyā, a set of dacoits who take refuge in the waterways and jungles around Morrellganj, where they can loot stragglers with impunity along the outer waterways of the Sundarbans. (5) Smugglers of forest produce and salt, and some thugs from the islands. There is also evidence that gangs of Banpar Mallāhs from Bihār work along the trade routes and, when necessary, do not hesitate to resort to violence.

For police purposes the district is divided into 13 *thānas* Police.

Subdivision	Thana	Outpost
Khulnā	Khulnā	{ Khulnā Town Thakurgaon
	Baṭāliā & Durrā	Dānupī
	Jackāliā	
Bāgherī	Bāgherī	{ Kāchī
	M. lā	{ Kāchī (D. P.)
	Morrellganj Kānphā	Sānānā
Sātkhīrā	Sātkhīrā	Sātkhīrā Town
	Asānā	B. d. Sā
	Kāṭhā	B. d. Sā
	Kāṭhānā	{ D. l. & Town Sānānā P. l. Sānānā

with 12 outposts as shown in the margin. Some of the latter have been declared police stations for the purposes of investigation. There are also 7 river patrols for the protection of river traffic and for the prevention and detection of

crime on the waterways. The regular police force consisted in 1908 of the Superintendent of Police, 4 Inspectors, 42 Sub-Inspectors, 46 Head-Constables, and 357 constables, exclusive of 48 men employed in river patrols. The total strength of the force was, therefore, 450 men representing one policeman to every 4·2 square miles and to every 2,570 of the population. There is a small body of town police in the municipalities; and the rural police for the watch and ward of villages in the interior consists of 153 *dafadārs* and 2,312 *chaukidārs*, representing one *chaukidār* to every 5·14 inhabitants.

Khulnā is a saliferous tract in which a preventive establishment is entertained to prevent the illicit manufacture of salt and to survey the saline tracts. This establishment is directly under the control of the Collector and consists of one Inspector, three

SALT
DEPART-
MENT.

Sub-Inspectors, six *jamādārs* and 62 peons. The district has been divided into three ranges with headquarters at Bardal in thāna Asāsuni, at Chalnā in thāna Paikgāchā, and at Morrellganj. The Inspector supervises the work of the three ranges, each of which is in charge of a Sub-Inspector with two patrol parties, each composed of one *jamādār* and 9 peons. The salt officers have also been empowered to inspect excise shops and to make enquiries connected with the income-tax, and their services are sometimes utilized to help the local police in case of breaches of the peace and river dacoities. For work on the rivers two cutters are maintained, each manned by one *mānghi* and 6 boatmen.

JAILS.

There is a district jail at Khulnā and a subsidiary jail at each of the outlying subdivisional headquarters, viz., Bāgherhāt and Sātkhira. The subjail at Bāgherhāt has accommodation for 35 prisoners, viz., 9 male convicts, 3 female convicts and 23 under-trial prisoners, and that at Sātkhira for 12 prisoners, viz., 9 male and 3 female convicts. The district jail has at present accommodation for 49 prisoners, viz., for 22 male convicts, 5 female convicts, 13 under-trial prisoners, and 3 civil prisoners; while there is a hospital with beds for 6 patients. Sanction has been given to an extension of the jail, which will involve the addition of the following among other buildings—barracks for 80 prisoners, divided into 4 wards, one of which will have cubicles in order to separate juvenile prisoners; a hospital, containing a fever ward and a dysentery or ordinary ward, each with 8 beds; a female ward with accommodation for 8 prisoners; four cells, one for female, and three for male prisoners; and two work-sheds. There will also be a two-storied main gate building, containing jailors' quarters, the civil jail, various offices, and quarters for 21 warders; and provision is also to be made for under-trial and segregation wards. The industries carried on in the district jail are oil-pressing, wheat-grinding, paddy-husking, mat-making, alooe-pounding and rope-making.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT.

OUTSIDE the municipalities of Khulnā, Sātkhirā and Debbātā, DISTRICT BOARD. the administration of local affairs, such as the management of roads, the control of dispensaries and the provision of sanitation, etc., rests with the District Board, assisted by the Local Boards of Khulnā, Bāgherhāt and Sātkhira and by the Union Committees of Senhāti, Dumnā, Bāgherhāt, Mulghar, Kālirā and Māgurā.

The District Board consists of 17 members, of whom four are nominated by Government and eight are elected, while five are *ex-officio* members. Its average annual income during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 1,17,000, of which Rs. 69,000 were derived from Provincial rates, and the average annual expenditure was also Rs. 1,17,000, of which Rs. 65,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 28,000 on education, and Rs. 4,000 on medical relief. In 1906-07 its income was Rs. 2,20,000 (excluding an opening balance of Rs. 68,000), the principal receipts being Rs. 1,07,000 derived from rates, Rs. 74,000 obtained from civil works (including Rs. 59,000 from contributions and Rs. 14,000 from tolls on ferries), Rs. 26,000 contributed by Government and Rs. 5,000 obtained from pounds. The incidence of taxation is light, being only one anna four pies per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 2,17,000, of which Rs. 1,52,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 39,000 on education, and Rs. 12,600 on medical relief.

The District Board maintains 535.6 miles of roads, of which 27.6 miles are metalled and 508 miles are unmetalled, besides a number of village roads with an aggregate length of 928 miles; the cost of maintaining these roads in 1906-07 was Rs. 158, Rs. 58 and Rs. 14 per mile respectively. The Board also keeps up 98 pounds, which bring in an income of Rs. 5,000. Its educational expenditure is devoted to maintaining one Middle school and one industrial school (the Khulnā Coronation Technical school), and to aiding 48 Middle schools, 78 Upper Primary schools and 675 Lower Primary schools. It also maintains no less than 11 dispensaries and aids three others; in 1906-07 altogether 5.6